DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 171 811 UD 019 276

AUTHOR Carter, George E., Ed.; And Others
TITLE Essays on Minority Folklore: Selected Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Minority Studies (3rd, April 3, 1975), Volme 3.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ., La Crosse. Inst. for Minority Studies.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 180p.; For related documents, see ED 138 668 and UD 019 279
AVAILABLE FROM National Association of Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies, 101 Main Hall, University of Wisconsin-La Cross, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601 ($5.00)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Culture; *American Indians; *Ethnic Studies; *Folk Culture; Legends; Mythology; Poetry; Puerto Ricans; Spanish American Literature; *Spanish Americans

ABSTRACT

This collection of selected conference papers includes experiences of specific minority groups: the native Americans, the Chicanos, and the Puerto Ricans. The papers represent the work of folklorists, historians, musicians, literary critics, and minority and ethnic studies experts. The section on native American oral tradition includes papers on Indian oratory, Algonkian communal values, Indian wisdom stories, and the work of Alex Posey, a Creek Indian. In the section on Latino folklore, the topics covered are the importance of folk literature in the Chicano experience, the creation of myth in Chicano literature, Hispanic wedding customs in New Mexico, the paradoxes of contemporary Puerto Rican poetry, the literature of the Barrio, and the Puerto Rican folk tradition of the child's wake. (Author/MC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 117811

SELECTED PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON MINORITY STUDIES

APRIL, 1975

ESSAYS ON MINORITY FOLKLORE

Editors:
GEORGE E. CARTER
JAMES R. PARKER

Assistant Editor:
CAROL SWEENEY

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
George E. Carter
Nat Assoc. of Interdisc. Ethnic Studies
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

UD019276

Published by:

INSTITUTE FOR MINORITY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - LA CROSSE

1977
Volume 3

PREFACE

by

George E. Carter

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

La Crosse, Wisconsin

The highlight theme for the 3rd Annual Conference on Minority Studies held at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, April 24-26, 1975, was "The Importance of Folklore in the Minority Experience." From the opening session to the end of the Conference, the theme provoked debate on exactly what the term "Folklore" meant and if, in the context of the minority experience, some unique element was not present in the term. Debate also centered on the possibility of an alternative term, such as "oral tradition," which might have greater meaning for racial minority groups. Or perhaps the word has meant different things in the heritage of the racial minority groups in the United States.

The present collection presents papers that dealt with the Native-American, Chicano, and Puerto Rican experience. A separate volume presents the materials presented on the Afro-American experience. Within the context of the Native-American and Latino tradition, one can see demonstrated the reality of the assumption that folklore has meant different things to different people. Oral tradition has been much more important to the Native-American than it has to the Chicano or the Puerto Rican experience.

The present collection also illustrates the usefulness of an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of folklore. The papers represent the work not only of folklorists, but also of historians, musicians, literary critics, and minority or ethnic studies experts. Each discipline represented provides a different perspective on the subject of folklore. The interdisciplinary approach illustrates some of the unique folkloric traditions of the groups examined.

Recognition of the interdisciplinary approach to folklore is important for another reason. At the 3rd Annual Conference on Minority

Studies, a new national association had its birth. The name for this new venture, The National Association of Interdisciplinary Studies for Native-American, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Asian Americans, since shortened to the National Association of Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies, accents the interdisciplinary approach. The papers presented here demonstrate that folklore can be a part of minority studies and that an interdisciplinary approach to folklore is viable in the context of the heritage of racial minorities. The new organization, N.A.I.E.S., still survives to encourage the study of and about racial minorities in the American experience, including their folklore. Interdisciplinary approaches demonstrate a commonality of interest and at the same time encourage comparative treatments.

The papers presented here are those that the editors selected as the best from the many that might have been included. The editors wish to acknowledge the encouragement and financial assistance provided by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Special appreciation is given to Chancellor Kenneth Lindner who has been consistent in his active support of the series of conferences hosted at La Crosse. The editors also wish to thank all those participants and others who contributed in so many ways to the 3rd Annual Conference on Minority Studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE iii
George E. Carter

PART I: THE NATIVE-AMERICAN ORAL TRADITION 1

INTRODUCTION 3
James R. Parker

THE ELOQUENCE OF INDIAN ORATORY 9
Silvester J. Brito-Hunting Bear

DEFINING THE CIVILIZED--ALGONKIAN COMMUNAL VALUES AND KIWAKWE, THE CANNIVAL GIANT 21
Kenneth M. Morrison

INDIAN WISDOM STORIES 63
Jerry D. Blanche

ALEX POSEY: CREEK STATESMAN, JOURNALIST, AND POET 77
Ruth Arrington

PART II: LATINO FOLKLORE 89

INTRODUCTION 91
James R. Parker

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLK LITERATURE IN THE CHICANO EXPERIENCE . . . 97
Guillermo Lux

AZTLÁN: THE CREATION OF MYTH IN CHICANO LITERATURE 111
Richard A. Valdés

HISPANIC WEDDING CUSTOMS IN NEW MEXICO--YESTERDAY AND TODAY . . . 129
Rosa Fernández Mines

THE PARADOXES OF CONTEMPORARY PUERTO RICAN POETRY 141
Rodolfo Cortina Gómez

LITERATURE OF THE BARRIO 149
Maria E. Torres

THE CHILD'S WAKE: A PUERTO RICAN FOLK TRADITION, IN ABELARDO DÍAZ ALFARO'S "EL BAQUINÉ" 163
Lucy Torres

PART I

THE NATIVE-AMERICAN ORAL TRADITION

Part I

INTRODUCTION

by

James R. Parker

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

La Crosse, Wisconsin

One of the richest tapestries of folklore woven with traditional values and philosophy is that of the Native-American peoples. A people's wisdom, wit, and humor is ro more beautifully constructed anywhere than in the enduring lore of the aboriginal tribes of America. Their fears and hopes, triumphs and defeats, their compassion and determination, dreams and disappointments have affected Americans as perhaps no other has or can. Of the collected lore, no other group has so small a written resource or so imperatively needs investigation for its preservation. There are few tasks for the people or the academy more compelling than this.

One of the most mysterious and intriguing characters in Native-American folklore is that of the Kiwakwe, variously called Windigo or Chenoo. The great Indian spirit of the cannibal giant has long fascinated people of all countries. This legendary giant was the subject of a short story by the English author, Algernon Blackwood, whose "Wendigo," published in The Lost Valley and Other Stories in 1914,[1] has once again won attention, if not for its accuracy, at least for its exploration of a being from North American Indian folklore of singular fascination. Kenneth Morrison's study, "Defining the Civilized," is an innovative approach to history employing the folkloric tradition to explore the role of the Kiwakwe in Algonkian communal values and its effect upon the interrelationship between the Indians and the French Jesuit priests. Morrison describes their adaptation to each other and, more importantly, describes the Indian perspective and perceptions of the Jesuits, reversing the usual view of the historical context peered at through the traditional prism of European institutions. Ultimately, Morrison's paper suggests a re-examination of the interrelationships

between European and Native-American peoples, divorced from ethnocentrism and focusing upon the adaptations and acculturation of both groups. Implicit is the reappraisal of our own values and perspectives in the writing of history examining "how western institutions and values strengthened or undermined Indian communities. . . ."

The oral tradition in Native-American folklore is as varied as it is powerful. S. J. Brito (Hunting Bear) suggests that the tradition of spontaneous oratory is often witty, usually reasoned and wise, but almost always eloquent. It is neither "stoic" nor "humorless." The recorded declarations of Tecumseh, Red Cloud, or Chief Joseph should leave little doubt, but Hunting Bear describes the contemporary use of oratory in the Native-American Church, asserting that the oral tradition survives, persists, and adapts, reaffirming traditional folk values.

Yet another aspect of the Native-American folkloric oral tradition is in the wisdom stories, especially about animals, which have historically acted as teaching devices for the children. Jerry Blanche's analysis of the stories is both entertaining and informative. These wisdom stories, while frequently fictional, are nonetheless witty and entertaining, always recording the ethics, values, beliefs, and traditions of the people. The stories help to preserve tribal values while they challenge the child to think, reflect, and entertain alternative viewpoints. Perhaps, as Jonathan Kozol has observed, the schools are too busy "indoctrinating complacency and obedience to authority" to employ entertaining and educational alternatives. Jerry Blanche contends that the educational value of the use of wisdom stories in the schools is that they help to dispel stereotypes, provoke thought,

encourage self-reliance, and provide an environmental compassion. Blanche challenges educators to employ the wisdom stories as a legitimate and indigenous alternative to traditional western thought. Such a path would at least lead to an appreciation of the stories and their authors, an imperative need in contemporary America.

White Americans have researched the history of their ancestors who were influential, those who were less important, and many who were irrelevant and tertiary figures. Simultaneously, the biographies of Native-Americans are sadly overlooked. What is true of historical studies is also true of American literature. With few exceptions, such as R. A. Lafferty's sensitive and brilliant characterization of Okla Hannali,[2] a Choctaw whose fictionalized life is based in historical fact, a novel both outrageously hilarious and devastatingly tragic, the American novel passes over a rich lode of cultural opportunities out of ignorance of Native-American culture. Ruth Arrington's historical portrait of the Creek, Alex Posey, is an effort to study his many talents and consistent influence among his people. While Alex Posey may not demonstrate the towering character of Lafferty's fictional Hannali Innominee, Posey's varied life, abilities, and talents demonstrate the legitimacy of Lafferty's characterization. Posey's use of folk tales to explain white politics combines his traditional background with the context of the white effort to impose "American" culture upon the Indian people of Oklahoma. Posey, the poet, the journalist, the humorous skeptic, the folklorist, the defender of the Creek people, is without question a man worthy of place in the nation's history.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Algernon Blackwood, The Lost Valley and Other Stories (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), reprint.

[2]R. A. Lafferty, Okla Hannali (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972).

THE ELOQUENCE OF INDIAN ORATORY

by

Silvester J. Brito-Hunting Bear
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The major values and customs in many folk and early traditional societies which govern a people's life style are often reflected in their oral tradition, specifically their oratory. Thus, for the American Indian, the oral tradition has always been a very important factor in his cultural and socio-political life. For example, the few accurate written accounts we have of the Indian heritage are, in effect, records of spontaneous speeches (oratory) made by tribal leaders. In fact, many of these oral narrations occurred in peace conferences between Indian leaders and frontier generals of the Union Army. In these speeches, tribal leaders eloquently expressed their people's grievances, expectations, desires, and needs.

Tribal affairs were settled around council fires without the benefit of the written word. Among many tribes the people had both war and peace chiefs, and often the speakers in these political meetings were men of eminence in both war and council. These leaders were not only men of dignity and ability, but they were also well trained in the oral tradition. In fact, young men impressed by the eloquence of these leaders would attend both peace and war councils so that they could hear their speeches, observe the delivery, and learn the art of reasoned arguments. The speeches presented by tribal leaders were not only eloquent; but they often were emotional in nature and also contained elements of wit and sarcasm which, in essence, clearly dispels the white man's stereotype image of the humorless, stoic, and silent drugstore Indian.

Indian orations were presented without the aid of a professional speech writer, a back stage prompter, or the use of a public address system. The speakers relied upon their memory, their training, and

their natural ability as participant observers around the council fire to capture the attention of their audience. The structure and form of their speeches was sound, and their use of literary devices was effective in carrying out clear and poignant addresses.

The Indian orators were well aware of the issues at hand. In their encounters with both rival tribes and the "blue coats" of the Union Army, these tribal leaders realized that within the peace councils they were expressing the values of their society, and that in the war councils they were bargaining for nothing less than survival. That bargaining was carried out on the battlefield as well as in council. Needless to say, Indian heroism on the battlefield is written in the logs of military history, but we are not often made aware of the eloquent oratory he used in both peace and war councils. If one uses one's imagination while reading these recorded speeches, the vigor and beauty of the Indian's presentation can be heard; and if it was possible for the reader to be present in contemporary traditional Indian societies, he would discover that this same type of oration still exists.

Today this aspect of the oral tradition continues to manifest itself in three ways: first, it is found within the unique socio-religious atmosphere of Indian ceremonials in which the eloquence of spontaneous oratory has the quality of a great art form. Secondly, it occurs within the home where an entire evening will be spent listening to the impromptu teachings of the elders of the group; and finally, orators continue to play a significant role in the tribal council, where today their narratives take the form of affirmative action, this being especially true within the local, state, and national meetings of

the Native American Church.

Within the Native American Church the orators are teachers, not instructors. To be more specific, these educators take the time to create an atmosphere in which the minds of the listeners are stimulated to the point of being motivated to learn. Of equal importance to this educational technique, but unlike many other educational atmospheres (as found in many Western oriented primary, secondary, and higher education systems), is the fact that these teachers allow the listener ample time in which to respond by either affirming or questioning what he has heard. Hence, interaction becomes an essential element in the oral tradition. In point of fact, it is this dialogue which makes learning so unique within any oral tradition, specifically that of the American Indian. In this educational setting, one has the quality of immediate response to the stimulus which cannot exist in the written tradition--a one-way street with a straight and narrow path, a one-way media. For example, in this tradition the best thing one can do is to provide questions at the end of the chapter. It is the former type of learning situation, within the oral tradition, which takes place in the educational meetings of the Native American Church.

Eloquent Indian orators in Indian societies are highly respected--particularly in Native American Church ceremonies. In fact, people will make a special effort to attend ceremonies where a well-known (intertribal) speaker will be present. My father, who resides in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is one such orator. I have attended several Native American Church ceremonies with him, and it never fails that the leader of the ceremony will ask him to speak on his behalf for the purpose of reminding the group of some particular aspect of their world

view, such as not actively realizing how important it is that they should maintain their good will toward each other, which may have become dormant in their metaphysical and physical lives. Furthermore, I have attended ceremonies among the Navajo, Winnebago, and other Native American groups; and upon relating to them who my father is, they have stated that if they do not personally know him, they have heard of him because of his eloquent performances as a gifted orator in Native American Church ceremonies. He is reputed to say the right thing at the right time for a particular occasion. Indeed, his oral presentations are considered very thought provoking.

An important aspect of these oral presentations is that they are spontaneous and extemporaneous, and therefore they contain that vitality of life which is unique to the Indian orator because his speeches have not been preconceived, preplanned, or set down in the written word to be read at a particular place and time, for a particular occasion. Not only are these speeches within the Church spontaneous, but they are also presented by articulate speakers, with great insight, in a poetic language which lends beauty, strength, and understanding to a way of life that is so unique to the Indian, particularly his peculiar position as a subjugated minority within the confines of an imperialistic and dominant society.

Let me further illustrate the significance of speeches in religious ceremonies of the Native American Church. Ceremonial leaders (road men) in the main present their oration as a public address. Within this particular context, the leaders advise the immediate congregation as to the nature of the ceremony. For example, they will clearly state whether it is an appreciation, an instructional, or a social-political

meeting.

A good example of an appreciation address is one in which the group's appreciation is illustrated as a means of giving thanks to the Creator for his blessings with regard to either the well being of the group, or for the recovery of a Church member who has been severely ill.

A second form of appreciation speech is one of a more social nature. This type of speech, as presented by the leader on behalf of the congregation and himself, expresses to a member, with deep emotion and keen sensitivity, both personal and group approval for what he has done for the well being of the group. On one occasion while attending a Winnebago ceremony, the leader addressed me, as well as the congregation, stating that they felt I had favored them by sponsoring that particular meeting. He said that I had helped to make it possible for friends and relatives to be together, not only in prayer, but this particular occasion had also served the purpose of reuniting them as a social-political group.

There are also occasions in these meetings when individual members will ask the leader's permission to speak to the group with regard to a personal intention such as religious adoption. For example, while I was in the aforementioned meeting with the Winnebago people, I presented such an adoption speech to the group. In this speech I stated who I was adopting as my ceremonial brother, and why I was doing so. In essence, not only was I doing my best to clearly convey to the group the idea that I realized the significance of the adoption, but I also wanted to share with them that moment of joy in realizing the unity of Indian brotherhood with regard to a man who not only served as my

ceremonial teacher, but had also treated me as though I was a member of his immediate family.

Another type of adoption speech was exemplified in a latter part of this same ceremony when the ceremonial leader honored me by indicating to the group that it was his wish that his clan adopt me and give me a Winnebago name. In this particular address, he asked approval and support from members of other Winnebago clans for this adoption. It would entail a lengthy discussion in order to wholly do justice to the full and eloquent speech which he addressed to the group on my behalf in explaining his reason for my adoption by his people.

Among different tribal groups, I was made aware of other types of appreciation speeches which were given in the form of a group address. These speeches described the relationship of a local member to a visiting Native American Church member from a different nearby region or state or even tribe.

Instructional speeches play an important role in Native American Church oratory. About midway through most Native American Church ceremonies, the leader will request older people to speak to the congregation in order to refresh their minds about the importance of the group's world view. The Church elder's orations would contain such information as the importance of man understanding his role in relation to all the animate and inanimate elements in nature, such as having great respect for other forms of life, like animals and plants, water, wind, fire, and our mother earth--all these being not only his friends and food suppliers, but also the potential enemies of all forms of life. Only if we remember and value these ways will we maintain our respect for them. Granted, though we are aware of consuming them, be it in the

form of meat, bread, or wild fruit, as well as man's nutrients, we must also thank them, for they serve to supplement and maintain our earthly existence. The elder emphasizes that we must realize that man does not stand alone, that he is dependent on other sources of life for the propagation of his existence. Furthermore, we must also maintain this attitude toward the natural elements of life: wind, water, fire, and the earth. In this sense, it is important that we keep in mind our relationship to our mother earth; that regardless of whether we view this element from a religious or a scientific perspective, from her we have evolved, and to her we shall return.

The old people also stress the importance of having respect for one's elders. The elders are listened to carefully, for it is clearly understood that, because they have lived longer, they merit our utmost attention. They portray in eloquent speeches a tone of voice, a depth of meaning, of sincerity, of wisdom, and understanding of the way man should live, unmatched and unparalleled.

Additionally they recognize the importance of the woman's role in the life of a man, for they continually remind us that "woman" is the main pillar of rock within the family and group structure. Women are not only important in giving birth, raising children, and taking care of the home, but they are man's greatest refuge in time of great stress. The Church elders also emphasize the importance of having the entire congregation realize that each of the foregoing components in man's society and culture is merely a part of the whole spectrum of his life, part of an integral system which are inseparable.

Admittedly, one may not necessarily learn how to cope with the problems of Indian adjustment to Anglo-American society by listening to

our elder statesmen, primarily because the time in which they lived was so obviously different than our present status in Western society. Nevertheless, one understands that from their teachings we can learn how to prepare ourselves psychologically to cope with new encounters in life. For example, one of the teachings of the elders is that it is not so hard to live life, but the problem is in knowing how to live life. By this they mean that biologically man learns to exist, but not all men are able to learn to coexist with one another. It is equally important that one retain and cultivate the knowledge of having respect for nature and coexisting with it--not necessarily conquering it. The Ute people have this respect. They have not lost it, thus we must also retain it and propagate it.

Within the context of instructional speeches I have heard Native American Church leaders counsel the youth about the importance of the religious paraphernalia (equipment) and how it should be properly used in the ceremony. These leaders tell specific stories about the origin of the religion, calling particular attention to the various reasons why each instrument plays such a significant role in the ceremony. These speeches are addressed not only to the youth, but also the middle-aged people who may have become complacent and thus tend to forget this cultural aspect of their religious tradition. In addition, leaders advise young people about the importance of being constantly aware of the behavior of the ceremonial leaders and participants within the context of each ceremony. In essence, they are the ones who must carry on the religion with all its values and beliefs and thus maintain it for their children.

Social-political speeches are the subject of regional, state, and

national meetings of the Native American Church throughout the year. The speeches deal with the significance of the organization as a united political group which is part of a subculture. They serve the purpose of bringing about an awareness of the importance of group solidarity within the Church membership.

Additionally, local Indian communities have monthly and yearly councils in which community and tribal projects and problems are discussed. In point of fact, many men who are the religious leaders of Native American Church regional chapters are also community leaders who, by the use of their speeches, address representatives of the community in matters which deal with the problems and progress of the community group as a whole. It is important to reiterate that the foregoing presentations are usually spontaneous narratives.

Even though in many instances the American Indian had lost many aspects of his culture prior to contact with the ways, values, and life style of Western society, there is one aspect of ancient tradition which the Indian maintains with tenacity: his oral tradition. The eloquence of Indian oratory is still a vital and on-going element of his culture and of his society, especially in the meetings of the Native American Church. One should keep in mind, however, that the Native American Church is merely one example of the vitality of the oral tradition, although it is an excellent microcosm of a major phenomenon in many different Indian societies across the country. In addition to those recorded documents of Indian oratory,[1] the Indian's eloquent use of his oral narrative, which in fact is part of his culture, should for all time dispel the misconception of the Indian as an ignorant, noble, and wild savage.

FOOTNOTES

[1]T. C. McLuhan, ed., Touch the Earth (New York: Promontory Press, 1971); John R. Milton, ed., The American Indian Speaks (Vermillion, South Dakota: Dakota Press, 1969); Shirley Hill Witt and Stan Steiner, eds., The Way (New York: Vintage Books, 1972); and Vine Deloria, Jr., We Talk You Listen (New York: Macmillan Company, 1970).

DEFINING THE CIVILIZED--ALGONKIAN COMMUNAL VALUES AND KIWAKWE, THE CANNIBAL GIANT

by

Kenneth M. Morrison
University of California-Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

Historical attempts to recognize and convey accurately the experiential realities of the Indians of Northeastern North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have long foundered on the ethnocentric character of Euro-American documentary sources. Frequently these sources reflect only the major attitudes of colonial English or Frenchmen to the Indian. The lack of authentic Indian sources has long dismayed the historian; but, in addition, the scholar's own approach has limited his view of the historical Indian. The Native American has been viewed only too often through the perspectives of European institutions and values. Studies have considered the general relationship of the Indian and European law, English or French mission programs, the practice of land cessions or the fur trade, and, most consistently, the effect of Indian wars on a perplexed white society. Until very recently these histories have been written with an eye to establishing the moral intent of colonial Europeans vis-à-vis the Indian. Arguments have raged about the justice of Massachusetts' Indian law or the English purchase of Indian land. The too frequent result has been that the Indian's point of view--because sources establishing the ethical context of the Indian world are rare indeed--has been assumed to correspond to the major ethical assumptions of the colonial American.[1]

This paper attempts to discover within Algonkian social values those factors whose elusiveness have constrained the professional historian to a "civilized-primitive" conceptual dichotomy which has led, in turn, to an uncritical acceptance of the progressive character of the dominant "western" conception of time and historical process.[2] Northeastern Algonkian oral tradition provides an outline of distinctive communal values which influenced tribal behavior toward Europeans. The

second part of the paper examines some of the interpersonal dimensions of the historical meeting of northeastern Algonkians and the Society of Jesus. It suggests that a realistic analysis of Jesuit relations with tribal groups rests ultimately on an evaluation of the priests' success in recognizing the special complex of tribal values ordering Algonkian behavior and their use of those values as vehicles for cross-cultural dialogue.

The entire issue of acculturation in seventeenth and eighteenth century New France demands re-examination.[3] The cultural and political concerns of Canadian historiography have eclipsed the place of the Indian in the history of New France. Canadian historians, like their American counterparts, have championed a progressive ideology. Thematic focus on the development of the Canadian nation has obscured the unique realities of the French colonial period. The paradoxical place of the French in Canada's economic, technological, and political history remains a controversial issue. Historians still hotly debate whether or not New France had a developed bourgeoisie.[4] The issue--within the present terms of the discussion--is of interest because its resolution would throw light on the impact of the Treaty of Paris on French colonial life and how the experience of being "a conquered people" channeled French contributions to the "Canadian Mosaic." These themes are little developed beyond Francis Parkman's definition of the problem. For Parkman the history of New France was mired hopelessly in a backward, suspiciously religious mentality. The French and their "savage" Indian allies failed inevitably before the tremendous economic and political development of the American democratic experiment.[5] Indians, as well as the French, have remained on the fringes of Canadian

history because historians have assumed that technological and political progress were the real issues of importance.[6] Among Euro-Americans a structural and technological definition of "civilization" has pre-empted the contribution of local communities and regions to the growth of national values.

Correctives to these seemingly inexorable ethnocentric value assumptions do exist. Two generations of amateur and professional scholars have collected and scrutinized the mythical tales of the Algonkian northeast. These stories provide a context for establishing the major ethical attitudes which colored the Algonkian world.[7] The folk and mythic tales played important value-formative roles within individual Algonkian societies analogous to the educational institutions--family, school, and church--of western nations. The tales linked the mythic past and the sacred origins of Indian societies to the issues the Algonkian peoples experienced in their daily life. Beyond extending the sacred character of past experience to the political events of day-to-day life, the tales also conveyed the primary moral principles which molded the personal realities of Algonkian social life.[8] As vehicles for moral education and socialization, the stories constitute a unique source for discussing Algonkian response to Europeans and for evaluating the effect of western institutions on their societies.

Problems of alienation and social conflict centrally concerned the northeastern Algonkian. Recent anthropological and philosophical studies emphasize that human communities and the formation of distinctive social and religious structures are culturally unique responses to the universal experience of personal and social alienation.[9] Most

theorists assume a primeval time free of social conflict and tension. In that era, or as the Algonkian would put it, in the "old time," man existed in unity with the world; properly speaking, primeval man did not experience what is now referred to as the body/mind differentiation, and the subjective/objective bifurcation did not divide his consciousness. Though the implications of this postulated time lie far beyond the purposes of this paper, several important distinctions can be made. Many cultures promise such a time, European and Algonkian among them, and philosophical and religious speculation wrestles with introduction of evil into the world. Suddenly, the world and man were no longer one. Man perceived that beings existed who were inimical to himself. Tension replaced the unitary relation linking the human and non-human worlds. In this situation, with the memory of that "old time" not quite lost, alienated man constructed social, religious, and mythological structures to mediate the conflict between the world of body and spirit. Complicated strictures came to define not only the "like me" and the "unlike me" on the sociological level, they also provided at the same time avenues of communication bridging the gap between the remembered "ideal" past and the "real" present.[10]

The northeastern Algonkian demonstrated sophisticated consideration of this problem of alienation. Their characteristic view of the world reflected the recognition of the dynamic interplay of what western man calls "civilized" and "savage" behavior. Algonkian culture successfully balanced dramatic tensions generated by the polarity between individualistic impulse and the norm of community oriented behavior. The particular tensions differed from those experienced by members of the structurally complex societies of the European colonies. Yet the

Algonkian experience of community, theirs were kinfolk societies, and their perception of a world relatively free of the impersonal attitudes of "objective" western conceptual patterns indicates that the "primeval" qualities of the lost unitary world were more accessible to them than to contemporary Europeans. The Algonkian participated in the natural order in a manner frequently seen as visionary, superstitious, and improbable. But even for them, evil remained a challenge to their carefully created social and religious order.

The Algonkian responded to the negative forces of social individuation and personal alienation with the aid of a variety of beings who bridged the distances between the human and the other-than-human worlds. Distinct nations of plant and animal beings comprised the natural world for the Algonkian, and the profoundly social behavior of such beings included communication with human beings. These persons-of-the-other-than-human class, as the Algonkian conceived them, offered human society models of social cooperation. These beings united the social and spiritual aspects of being and symbolized concretely the ethics of political behavior.[11] The survival of the Algonkian bands depended on the proper ordering of human attitudes. Shamanistic and ritualistic practices, as well as personal totemic bonds with other-than-human beings, emphasized cooperation within the extended kin group and with other-than-human persons as the behavioral norm.[12]

Algonkian culture heroes, in particular, mediated between worlds. The character of Gluskabe, the central figure of the Abnaki, Malecite, and Micmac "old time," shared personality traits with the culture heroes of other Algonkian bands because winter opposed them all.[13] As folk and mythic tales recount, cold and brutal winter figured centrally

in Algonkian consciousness. The season pervaded all of Algonkian culture and constituted the milieu which evoked individual and social values and, at once, put them to their severest test. As the Abnaki recounted, Gluskabe returned one spring to his grandmother's home. She rejoiced to see him for she had been unhappy. "Grandson," she said, "this has been a very hard winter. A great many of our descendents have starved to death." Gluskabe shared her concern for their people, and he angrily demanded to know where Winter lived. Despite his grandmother's warnings, Gluskabe set out to accost him. After a long march to the north, he found Winter as a man of ice, living in a house of ice. Winter mocked Gluskabe's power and mercilessly let him freeze to death.[14] Gluskabe revived the following summer and set out to steal Summer from the crude people who held it captive. He returned north with his burden until he again reached Winter. This time Gluskabe mocked Winter and, with the aid of Summer, overcame him.[15]

Other beings symbolized the antithesis of Gluskabe's careful consideration for the welfare and prosperity of his people.[16] None were more powerful, dangerous, and awesome than the cannibal giants, beings variously called Kiwakwe, Chenoo, and Windigo, whose anti-social natures threatened the delicate order of the Algonkian kin groups.[17] The Algonkian recognized the cannibal giant in various forms but feared them all. There were first natural beings who were cannibals. Although these giants were both male and female, they were incapable of the affectionate relationships of Algonkian men and women. These cannibal giants hated each other fiercely. Their meetings produced violent confrontations from which only one cannibal survived. The victor invariably swallowed the ice heart of the vanquished and departed

correspondingly more powerful and fearsome.[18]

Human beings also became cannibals through various causes. A shaman could transform the healthy individual into a vicious, people-hating Kiwakwe. He had two means at his disposal. He could act directly against a person or he could interfere indirectly by depleting the game upon which an Indian group depended. The cannibal giant possessed some individuals through the vision quest if they accepted his protection and the power he offered. Others became Windigoes through spiritual dissipation; such people gradually hardened their hearts to their kin and degenerated into wild creatures more at home in the forest than in human company.[19] The Algonkian tendency to ostracize deviant persons reinforced this desocialization process.[20] Windigoes lost their human status; as one Beaver Indian, who had become a cannibal during a famine period, put it: "Although I still exist I cannot any longer consider myself a human being."[21] The Kiwakwe, Windigo, and Chenoo showed the Algonkian, to borrow Roy Harvey Pierce's observation about the Puritan response to Indians, what they were not and must not be.[22]

The cannibal giant symbolized a savage, evil force for the northeastern Algonkian, and human Windigoes reminded them about the core values which civilized their intercourse and prevented their band communities from disintegrating. Both kinds of Windigoes were creatures of the northern forest; indeed, they were the major exception to the cooperative behavioral norms the Algonkian perceived in the natural world. The Penobscot word for the giant, Kiwakwe, or "going about in the woods,"[23] typified Algonkian response to the anti-social characteristics of the being. The creatures were all the more fearsome for their

habit of posing as relatives to insinuate themselves in a favorable light.[24] The cannibals were necessarily extremely cautious; their appearance alone exposed their essential nature. The giant was "something made of devil, man and beast in their most dreadful forms." He had "wolfish eyes," and his hunger for human flesh so maddened him that he had gnawed away his lips and shoulders.[25] The giant frequently covered himself with balsam pitch and then rolled about in the forest's debris. The giant's size corresponded directly to his spiritual power, and he became larger "the angrier he grows."[26] All cannibals hated warmth and preferred to inhabit the cold regions of the far north. One declared to a group of Malecite hunters that "this country . . . is too warm for me, I am going to a colder one."[27] In more southerly regions, the cannibal giant was a winter creature, and his heart of ice prevented him from seriously threatening the community during the summer months. One individual becoming a Windigo experienced a "burning sensation" which only snow could relieve.[28]

The process of disintegration into a cannibal was gradual but recognizable.[29] The Algonkian had methods to save the individual from so horrendous a fate. A shaman might struggle with the Windigo spirit and, if his power was great enough, destroy him.[30] Significantly, such effective shamanistic power came from a deeply rooted concern for the kin group. One shaman who successfully overcame a cannibal giant was good "with (or to) the Indians." The Ojibwa reported that "he used them good, all like his children anywhere he saw them, and the Indians like this man." He Sah ba "is a great man for this world," the Ojibwa concluded, because he "used the people good all the time."[31] The shaman with effective power, like the Algonkian culture heroes, owed

their stature to the unusual development of interpersonal sensitivity. Ordinary individuals were more likely to succumb to windigo sickness unless some close relative challenged the evil force. "With non-shamans, assiduous nursing and loving care during the period of melancholia will persuade the sufferer to face life again," Ruth Landes observed of Ojibwa treatment of the affected person.[32] When kinfolk failed to reintegrate hopelessly deranged persons, the community no longer reacted to them within traditional kin values. Frequently, a family member or a friend killed the dangerous person, and the Algonkian so feared windigo cannibalism that an afflicted individual sometimes actually begged to be destroyed.[33]

The stories about cannibal giants, more clearly than the case histories of windigo psychosis, indicate the social significance of this phenomenon. Those tales show that Algonkian society was based on the kinship hunting band and that corresponding face-to-face, intimate relationships between relatives were most effective in bringing about psychological and social adjustment to group behavioral norms.[34] Algonkian societies defined "civilized" behavior in kinship terms as the cannibal giant stories demonstrate.

One story is of special significance for its highly developed details and wide distribution among the northeastern Algonkian. Teicher collected variants from three different Ojibwa groups; others were collected among the Abnaki, Malecite, and Micmac far to the east.[35] A Penobscot Abnaki story capsulizes the essential elements of all these tales.

A man, his wife and little girl were living far from other people in the woods. They heard someone coming. Suddenly a noise was heard in

> the smoke hole of the wigwam and looking up they saw a Ki'wa'kwe peering down. The old woman of the wigwam said aloud, "Oh! Your grandfather has come," speaking to her husband. The monster was pleased at this and grew small. He came around and entered the camp. The woman tried to feed him but he would not eat in spite of her coaxing. He said, "I shall meet somebody here and we will fight." Then he sent them away across a lake and he fought with the other Ki'wa'kwe. He had told them to leave the place if he got killed by the other. But he won the fight and when it was over he ate with them, becoming again an ordinary man.[36]

The other versions of the tale possess similar features, and all convey the same message. The woman did not show her fear of the cannibal giant and greeted him warmly as a long lost father or grandfather. Such treatment "startled" and "amazed" Kiwakwe and caused him to consider the possibilities of a life style he had never known before. The subsequent relationship between the cannibal and the Indian people depended first on the social integrity of the woman.

> She was a wise and good woman. She took him in; she said she was sorry to see him so woebegone; she pitied his sad state; she brought him a suit of her husband's clothes; she told him to dress himself and be cleaned. He did as she bade. He sat by the side of the wigwam, and looked surly and sad, but kept quiet. It was all a new thing to him.[37]

The process had only just begun. The woman's husband, warned about the cannibal, returned to the camp and he too accepted the creature as an honored member of the family. "He went in and spoke kindly. He said, 'N'chilch,' 'My father-in-law,' and asked where he had been so long." The cannibal again "stared in amazement, but when he heard the

son talk of all that had happened for years his fierce face grew gentler."[38] Through a consistently kind reaction, the Micmac couple encouraged the giant to change himself from within; their behavior actually provided him with a model of socially considerate relations that he had never before understood. The Micmac giant filled a large kettle with the tallow the woman gave him. He heated it until it was scalding hot and then drank it all at once. "He became sick, he grew pale. He cast up all the horrors and abominations of earth, things appalling to every sense. When all was over he seemed changed." With the Micmac couple's aid, the cannibal giant transformed himself. Later he ate a great deal of their food which had previously disgusted him. "From that time he was kind and good. They feared him no more."[39]

The relationship between the giant and the Ojibwa differs from the Micmac and Penobscot stories; but, in the end, the effect is the same. In this instance, the cannibal giant, who was significantly the "greatest among them," refused to be addressed as father. "You're not my daughter," he answered. The Ojibwa woman insisted: "But when I dreamed about you a few nights ago you called me your daughter," she rejoined. This changed the giant's mind, and he ran up from the river and kissed her. Then he went into the house and kissed her children; "he really believes this was his daughter; and this is where this woman beats (bests) him."[40]

The Ojibwa couple, unlike the Micmac, were not initially inclined to trust the cannibal giant, so his conversion was correspondingly delayed. Late in the afternoon after his arrival, the giant suggested that the woman go and meet her husband. "He's gone in the direction where I came from, and he may be afraid when he sees my tracks," he

advised.[41] The Ojibwa remained ill at ease and conspired to kill the giant. When they returned they discovered him outside with their children "sitting on his wrist and he was singing to them." The giant arose at once, kissed the man, and called him son-in-law. This change in attitude toward people did not immediately cure the giant though his new family was safe in his company. He killed some nearby Indians and refused the food the couple offered him. "When breakfast was ready he says that he'll have his outside where he left his bundle. He always had his meals there till he ate all these Indians he had killed." In time, the attachment he developed to the Ojibwa couple civilized the cannibal giant. "He was very useful, and now he's a good man. He had been a very bad man at first."[42]

The transformed giants were all solicitous of the well-being of their new kin groups. They retained their prodigious powers but used them only for the good of the hunting band. The stories are symbolically consistent, for starvation no longer threatened the group which embraced and cured the cannibal. Each giant also proved to the people that he was no longer anti-social. Each confronted other giants and tested their new found strength. The Micmac version of the tale is especially vivid:

> One day the Chenoo told them that something terrible would soon come to pass. An enemy, a Chenoo, a woman, was coming like wind, yes--on the wind--from the north to kill him. There could be no escape from the battle. She would be far more furious, mad, and cruel than any male, even one of his own cruel race, could be. He knew not how the battle would end; but the man and his wife must be put in a place of safety.[43]

The Ojibwa giant also attacked an adversary, and he drew an explicit

moral from the battle: "You will see me running on water and the enemy, too, and if you hear me reach the other side, people shall never kill and eat each other any more."[44] In the Micmac story the cannibal giant succeeded against his adversary only with the aid of his relative. "My son-in-law, come and help me," the giant cried. "You have no son-in-law to help you," the female Chenoo mocked.[45] Together, giant and man destroyed their common enemy. And, in the spring, the giant, "with softened soul," went with the couple down the rivers to the sea. Another cannibal discovered them on the way, and they had to be especially cautious for the reformed giant no longer cared to fight. "I prefer peace," he simply declared.[46]

As the three travelled south, another change affected the giant, for he "could not endure the soft airs of summer." He grew weaker and weaker; when they reached their village he had to be carried like a little child. He had grown gentle. His fierce and formidable face was now like that of a man. His wounds had healed; his teeth no longer grinned wildly all the time. The people gathered round him in wonder.[47]

At this point the Micmac tale includes a discussion of the religious effect and social significance of the introduction of Jesuit missionaries among the eastern Algonkian people. The cannibal giant was dying, and the Micmac couple sent for the French priest who lived in their village. The giant and the priest were at first antagonistic. The Jesuit "found the Chenoo as ignorant of all religion as a wild beast," and the giant was equally intolerant. "At first he would repel the father in anger," the story recounts. Eventually the giant and priest conversed, and "the old heathen's heart changed; he was deeply

moved." He asked to be baptized and died shedding the first tear of his life.[48]

The juxtaposition of these tales shows the Algonkian view that the cannibal giant personified the social evils threatening their communities. The Algonkian boldly declare the nature of social and spiritual degeneration. The Algonkian knew the civilized man for his concern for the people; the savage, conversely, was easily recognized for his self-concern and his utter contempt for people. A statement about the prevention and cure of social deviancy unites these two strains of thought about human behavior. Only a compassionate, trusting response can begin the gradual process of resocialization. A double-bind caught the incorrigibly individualistic and withdrawn person. He faced inevitable social rejection, and his own nature prevented him from recognizing his actual illness. It is in this light that the inclusion of the Jesuit in the Micmac tale is most revealing. Algonkian social and tribal consciousness was kin-based; by definition, people were uneasy and reticent about outsiders.[49] This fact, and the obviously transcultural aspect of the priest's relationship with a cannibal giant who has also been newly integrated into Micmac culture, suggests some major behavioral explanations for the apparent Jesuit success among the northeastern Algonkian.

Recent consideration of the windigo phenomenon has focused on the psycho/social causative factors associated with Teicher's case histories.[50] These are unfortunately drawn mainly from nineteenth century reports. Charles A. Bishop emphasizes the ethnohistorical record and accepts the aboriginal existence of a cannibal giant, but questions whether there was also an illness identifiable with windigo psychosis.

Bishop contends that a distinction must be made between famine cannibalism, connected with ecological crisis, and windigo psychosis. He argues that windigo belief influenced Algonkian interpretation of post-European contact famine cannibalism. Famine became an historic social threat to Algonkian kin groups; and, in time, the associated cannibalism became synonymous with windigo traditions.[51] A causal link is also postulated between the collapse of kin-directed behavior, sometimes called the atomization of Algonkian culture, and the higher incidence of windigo psychosis during the nineteenth century.[52]

The issue of an historical identification of the cannibal giant with the mental illness remains unsettled, but Bishop's analysis points to the conjunction of ecological and social pressures Algonkian groups experienced and the developing relationship between them and the Society of Jesus. The early Jesuit Relations refer frequently to what seemed to be the astounding acceptance of Christianity by a people who had widely practiced cannibalism.[53] Such references are never tied to actual reported cases of cannibalism, and they are probably a literary device used to contrast sharply supposed aboriginal values with the efficacious effect of Christian grace. The Jesuits came in time, however, to understand the varied meaning of cannibalism in Indian societies. The Jesuits slowly recognized types of cannibalism, and they reacted to each differently. They were most hostile to the practice of ritual cannibalism in which individuals ingested the heart of a distinguished and honored warrior of another tribal group. Such eating of a brave captive's heart "renders them courageous," Father Paul LeJeune observed in 1636.[54] The Jesuits remained opposed to this practice, and it gradually subsided among the Christianized Algonkian.

The Jesuits also recognized famine cannibalism. The most sensational outbreak occurred among the Huron after the Five Nations devastated their society in 1649. The Jesuits deplored the incident, but they observed that it constituted behavior in a time of extreme necessity. "It is true, this is inhuman," Father Ragueneau explained in 1650. He added that it was

> no less unusual among our savages than among the Europeans, who abhor eating flesh of their own kind. Doubtless the teeth of the starving man make no distinction in food, and do not recognize in the dead body him who a little before was called, until he died, father, son, or brother.[55]

Three years later the Jesuits recorded in their journal a similar outbreak of famine cannibalism among fugitive Frenchmen.[56] They had come to recognize that such incidents were an effect of the harsh conditions prevalent in North America.

The Jesuits noted other cases which indicate that emotional disorientation, while not necessarily a precipitating factor in cannibalism, did characterize the response of those persons who committed the act. LeJeune noted two examples of famine-induced cannibalism in 1635. A Frenchman reported that a group of Montagnais-Naskapi at Tadoussac imposed isolation on themselves. They remained in the woods, for they "do not dare appear before the others because they had wickedly surprised, massacred, and eaten their companions."[57] Even more clear is a case of windigo psychosis observed in 1635. An Indian told LeJeune "that his wife and sister-in-law contemplated killing their own brother." This surprised LeJeune; and, when he enquired why they would consider such an act, the man replied: "We are afraid . . . that

he will kill us during our sleep, to eat us." LeJeune responded that the French shared their food with the Indians and that hunger could not be the cause of the man's obsession. "That is true," the Indian answered, "thou givest us life; but this man is half mad, he does not eat, he has some evil design; we wish to prevent him, wilt thou be displeased at that?" LeJeune remained perplexed. "I could not consent to his death," he noted, "and yet I believed they had a good cause for fear." The Jesuit never found a satisfactory response. Three days later the man tried to kill some Frenchmen, and the governor, "seeing he was mad, had him put in chains, to surrender him to the first Savages that might come along."[58] The man's ultimate fate was not recorded.

Father Chrestien LeClercq reports a case of famine cannibalism which occurred among the Micmac in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. While the incident is not tied to windigo giant symbolism, LeClercq presents its development in some detail; and it says a great deal about social tension and deviance caused by famine among the Micmac. The winter of 1680 was particularly severe; by January, both the Micmac and the French were starving, and forty or fifty Micmac had died. One family group succumbed to cannibalism to survive. The man, "unable to endure the hunger which was devouring him alive," decided to kill and eat his wife. She recognized his intention "and in order to save her own life, put it into his mind to" kill and eat their children. The woman argued persuasively. "Is it not better," she asked her husband, "that we put to death some of our children, and that we eat them together, in order that I may be able to rear and to support the smaller ones who can no longer live if once they come to lose their mother?" A close relative joined them in the act, and some members of the family

survived the winter.[59]

The ensuing events illustrate the Micmaq's ethical response to cannibalism and how the guilty couple reacted to the social ostracism inflicted upon them for their deed. The couple bitterly reproached themselves for their weakness. "They could not find tears enough," said LeClercq, "nor words to condemn and to express on their own behalf the enormity of their crime." The couple internalized the community's judgment: "They imagined that they saw as many executioners as they met Indians; and . . . they travelled the woods day and night without ceasing, seeking everywhere in vain for a rest which they could find in no place." LeClercq reacted to the couple with some sympathy when he understood that they considered themselves unworthy to receive the instruction he offered to their kinfolk. They insisted that they could never learn "until this crime was entirely removed and pardoned by God" through the Bishop of Quebec. LeClercq comforted them; he told them that "God had more goodness and compassion for them than they had of wickedness and cruelty." Convinced of the priest's power, the couple accepted his proferred religious means to "appease the justice of God and to invite his mercy."[60]

The details of LeClercq's story, like those reported by LeJeune, suggest an important feature of the seventeenth century French/Indian relationship. The northeastern Algonkian experienced ecological disaster after the settlement of New France in 1608. Two factors operated jointly to threaten the survival of the Algonkian kin groups. In the late sixteenth century the fur trade encouraged the Montagnais-Naskapi in particular to overtrap and hunt the limited game resources north of the St. Lawrence River. The trade led in turn to exacerbated

intertribal rivalries as each group bid vigorously for a monopolistic commercial relationship with the French. European diseases further pressured the Algonkian. Both the fur trade and the diseases undermined the kin foundation of Montagnais-Naskapi society. The trade encouraged the development of individualistic rather than communal subsistence patterns. Disease also pushed some Algonkians to repudiate traditional communal values; when shaman failed to cure the diseases, traditional religious belief, which had supported kinship with other-than-human persons, lost effective power. In the wake of the illnesses, kin groups tended to disperse, and individuals found surfeit in any manner they could.[61] Both economic and social problems impelled the Montagnais-Naskapi to ally themselves with the French, but neither explains Algonkian reaction to the Jesuits.

The priests' acute observations about the effect of winter on the northeastern Algonkian led them to sympathize with the Indians.[62] Indian hospitality seemed more remarkable to them in the face of recurrent famine. The Jesuits knew, though they only slowly understood its implications, that there were no deprived persons among the Indians so long as food existed. Jesuit recognition of the kin based values of the Montagnais-Naskapi and the Abnaki encouraged the Indians to accept their religious leadership. In the 1630's disease again hit the Montagnais-Naskapi heavily, and Father LeJeune "decided to care for the bodies to aid the souls."[63] In 1634 LeJeune wintered with the family group of an Indian who died in his care at Quebec.[64] The Jesuits also nursed Manitouchatche, or LaNasse, the first Montagnais sachem to bring two or three households of his kinfolk to live near the Jesuit establishment.[65] When LeJeune returned from the woods in the spring of 1634

and found LaNasse ill at the mission, he embraced the sachem "like a brother." LaNasse preferred to be cared for by the Jesuits, and the meaning struck LeJeune. LaNasse resisted, said the priest, "his own wife, his children, his sons-in-law, his friends and fellow savages, his Manitousiouets, sorcerers, or jugglers, not once but many times, to throw himself into the arms of strangers . . . to die in their Faith and in their house."[66] The European presence initially disrupted Montagnais-Naskapi social life, and the Jesuits began to play a role among them analagous to those Algonkian individuals who invited the Kiwakwe into "civilized" modes of behavior. In discovering the nature of Algonkian "civil" values, the Jesuits found the means to confirm and strengthen the primacy of social values among the devastated north-eastern Algonkian.

The Montagnais-Naskapi sought a closer relationship with the French, and one group asked for asylum in 1633. They anticipated an Iroquois raid and, observed LeJeune, "they wanted to unite, that they might be stronger, but they feared famine in abandoning the chase. They asked us therefore if we would supply them with food." Ecological and economic disaster faced the Algonkians, and the Jesuits proposed to develop a relationship with them modeled on the Christian virtue of charity.[67] They realized that the larger French society in Canada did not share such sentiments.[68] "I must speak here of the charge which the Savages make against the French," LeJeune wrote in 1633. The Montagnais-Naskapi found French materialism repugnant. The French "love what is theirs; when you refuse anything to a Savage he immediately says Khisakhitan. 'Thou lovest that,' sakhita, sakhita, 'Love it, love it'; as if they would say that we prefer it to their friendship."[69] This was

no isolated cricitism. LeJeune observed that "there is no jealousy among them, they aid and relieve each other very generously, because they expect a return of the favor. If their expectation fail, they respect the person no longer, whoever he may be."[70] As time passed, LeJeune came to minimize the pragmatic aspects of Montagnais social motivation and to admire the positive nature of Algonkian kinship bonds. When he proposed to help the Montagnais to learn agriculture and Catholic religious practice, a shaman gave him pause. He called LeJeune a liar, "'because,' said he, 'we never see in this world men so good as thou sayest, who would take the trouble to help us without hope of reward.'"[71] The message of this and many similar confrontations impressed LeJeune. "When it is necessary to become a Savage with the Savages," he wrote as early as 1633, "one must take his own life and all that he has, and throw it away, so to speak, contenting himself with a very large and very heavy cross for all riches."[72] The Jesuits achieved that detachment, and a Montagnais-Naskapi mission grew near Quebec. It, in turn, opened the Algonkian northeast to the Society of Jesus.

The growing influence of the Christian Montagnais in the 1640's attracted the attention of the Abnaki further to the south.[73] Their motivation resembled that of the Montagnais-Naskapi except that the French barred them from the fur trade. The Abnaki wished to strengthen their traditional alliance with the Montagnais against the Iroquois. More importantly, the impact of liquor and European diseases disrupted their social life and led them to admire the Montagnais-Naskapi's thriving community. Abnaki visiting the Sillery mission returned repeatedly to their villages with word of the new order created between

the Montagnais and the French. In 1646 Governor Montmagny approved their request for a priest and sent Father Gabriel Druillettes to the Kennebec.[74]

Druillettes arrived among the Abnaki at an auspicious moment. Another epidemic had killed many Abnaki the summer before, and the shaman were powerless against it. The priest deeply touched the Abnaki, "winning their souls," the Relation declared, "through the care he gave their bodies." That some Abnaki survived the illness rebounded to the priest's credit. Their families "published everywhere that prayer was good, and that it cured their children."[75] The Jesuit successfully blended his personal concern for the Abnaki with the traditional shamanistic role. The Abnaki, however, observed the difference. "This man is very different from our Jugglers," they said. "The latter are always asking, and the former never asks anything; the latter are almost entirely absent from our sick but the former spends days and nights with them."[76] When Druillettes cured a stricken shaman by destroying his "drum and his charms," his influence increased.[77] In 1651 the Abnaki acknowledged their debt to the Jesuit and in a public ceremony declared that he was one of their people. Like the woman in the tales whose social integrity invited the cannibal giant into the family band, Gabriel Druillettes' behavior assured the Abnaki that his religious power was grounded impeccably in the welfare of the community.

Gabriel Druillettes brought the Society of Jesus closer to the cultural realities of the North American continent. Here were no great populous nations trumpeting their hollow superiorities over their neighbors. North Americans created on a different scale, and their

values, rooted in the everyday life of their kin groups, compared favorably with the abstract ideologies of European peoples.[78] This Algonkian world beckoned the Jesuits with an intensity their first pejorative judgments of "savagery" sharply highlighted. The Society of Jesus began work in Canada with a simple assumption of cultural superiority which they shared with all Europeans. The priests' first efforts were bent toward the creation of red Frenchmen. As educators in Europe's finest schools, the Jesuits naturally saw the school as a primary instrumant of cultural change. The Algonkians as promptly, and naturally, rejected formal education. The Jesuits learned from the failure, and in time they left behind many of the cultural expectations of French society. The priests clashed with French officials in the 1670's when the Crown demanded an intensified "frenchification" program.[79]

The Jesuits no longer saw "savagery" as the pre-eminent issue. The Society of Jesus knew the Algonkian--and their problems--well. The priests' failure in Canada stemmed from more than Indian rejection. The Jesuits watched the political and economic realities of the fur trade destroy the Huron in 1649. In the 1670's, liquor, surreptitiously traded with the Montagnais-Naskapi, thoroughly disrupted the social and religious life of the mission at Sillery. When English liquor and disastrous war drove many of the Abnaki to seek refuge in Canada after 1675, the priests were ready. The Abnaki revitalized the Sillery mission, and soon another, St. Francis, was created farther from threatening Quebec City. In time, these Abnaki carried word of the priests' sympathy back to Maine, and continuing hostile relations with the English strengthened the bond.[80]

The early experience of one of the most prominent Jesuit missionaries among the Abnaki illustrates, in microcosm, the acculturative process which occurred between the Society and the Algonkian. Sebastien Racle was thirty-eight years old when he arrived in New France in 1689.[81] His career as a professor of rhetoric in a Jesuit college had not prepared him for the Indian realities of New France. He found himself surrounded by a bewildering variety of Indian peoples, "which one may almost take," he immediately wrote his brother, "for animals as for men." Despite the initial shock, Racle remained open to the new experience. "It is with these nonetheless that I must pass the rest of my days," he continued, "it is these people that I must caress, cherish, and who must become the object of my cares. . . ."[82]

A year's stay among the Abnaki at St. Francis radically altered Racle's views. He was surprised that the Abnaki maintained their extended family households at the mission, and he began learning the Abnaki language with one of these kin groups. "I went there," he said, "as a child goes to school." And he learned more than he had expected. The Abnaki language delighted him. It "surely has its perfections and is fine." "One is convinced," Racle added, "when one considers its economy of expression." The Abnaki family won Racle's affection through teaching him their language. He referred to that particular family as "those of my cabin," and he gave one of the children his own name at baptism. "I love them very much," he told his brother. When Racle returned to the Jesuit college at Quebec, the mother of "little Sebastien" with all her children followed after. "You love us," she said, "and you were of our cabin, and you were our father." "Why then did you leave us," she asked? "I swear to you," Racle told his

brother, "that I could not respond to them except by my tears." "The Abnaki with whom I have lived up to the present are the gentlemen of the savages," he concluded.[83]

The integration of Sebastien Racle into Abnaki social life shows more about the development of a mutual alliance between the Society of Jesus and the Algonkian than evidence of either an economic, social, or religious crisis alone can explain. Only an analysis of the conjunction of Algonkian and French cultures can suggest the positive context which encouraged both Indian and Jesuit. It is striking that Jacques Bigot asserted that he functioned in a shamanistic role among the Abnaki. Though later observers noted the relationship between Jesuit success and their competition with native shaman, the conflict of values has gone largely unexplored. The Algonkian saw the Jesuits as shaman because the priests exercised spiritual power against traditional and post-contact evil, anti-social forces.[84]

There are additional cannibal giant stories which fill in the details. The Algonkian recognized the Jesuits as men of great spiritual power. One story indicates that the Micmac began to use crosses carved on the trees surrounding their village and band encampments to ward off the cannibal giant. The tale notes the depth of the new belief, for it was the old, traditional Micmac who advised the use of the cross as a protective device.[85] A Montagnais-Naskapi story suggests that Christian people might resist even the most dangerous cannibals.[86] Perhaps the tremendous pressures of the seventeenth century convinced the Montagnais-Naskapi that they no longer had the spiritual power to challenge the giant. In another Montagnais tale, a party of Indians tried unsuccessfully to kill a cannibal. "We cannot do it, our magic power

is too weak," one man declared despairingly. An equally powerless shaman perceived, with the aid of his guardian spirit, both the giant and a priest at a distance coming toward the camp. The shaman went at once to greet the priest. "We are all going to die here because the witigo has come among us and we cannot kill him," the shaman explained. "But the priest said, 'Oh no my child, he is not dangerous. We will kill him.'" The priest walked out onto the frozen lake and met the cannibal as he arrived. "The priest raised his crucifix, whereupon the witigo fell dead on the ice."[87]

These stories suggest that when the Jesuits came to appreciate Algonkian communal values, they also came to behave in ways the Algonkian could recognize in their own kinship terms. As has been noted earlier, only the good man, the individual who successfully integrated his personal needs with Algonkian kin-defined ethical norms, could successfully confront the cannibal giant. Both shamanistic and individual resistance stemmed from a profound awareness that the giant embodied anti-social qualities. The Micmac and Montagnais-Naskapi stories declare that the Jesuits were more powerful against the cannibal giant. Another Micmac story indicates that a syncretic process occurred; the Algonkian accepted the efficacy of Catholic ritual but utilized it in a traditional context. In that tale, Gluskabe, the culture hero, is reinterpreted in a Christian context.[88] Traditional belief held that Gluskabe created the social and institutional framework ordering Micmac society and that he defended it from internal and external threats. In the Jesuit influenced cosmology, Gluskabe is Christ's first-created being; and he promulgates, as before, the rules governing Micmac social intercourse. Another feature of the story, the identification of Adam,

or second-man, as the father of both European peoples and of evil forces in the world, suggests that while the northeastern Algonkian respected and identified with the Jesuits, they found that relationship atypical. Other Europeans threatened their communities, and they did not develop personal ties with the Algonkian as easily as the Jesuits.

A comparison of the "civilized-savage" value structure expressed in the cannibal giant stories with the actual behavior of historic French and Algonkian peoples has some interesting methodological implications for Indian history. The argument that French economic dependence on the Algonkian encouraged good relations and that, conversely, English and Indian relations faltered because the two peoples competed for the same land base, has dominated discussion of comparative French and English Indian relations. The argument is compelling on the surface. It says little, however, about Indian perceptions of Europeans, and while it points out an obvious difference between French and English responses, it cannot explain the positive relationship which existed between some Frenchmen and some Indians. When the cannibal giant stories are admitted as evidence about Algonkian belief and behavior, a different emphasis emerges. The discussion centers then on what actually occurred between particular Europeans and Indians. The concern is then on how western institutions and values strengthened or undermined Indian communities at any given moment in time. The historic relationship between the Algonkian and the Jesuits raises such methodological issues because, while both Indians and priests adapted to each other, the larger French society, like the English colonies, posed insurmountable economic, political, and military problems for the Indians. The structural impact of English and French institutions on Indian

communities is still largely unexplored. The cannibal giant stories suggest that only a careful discussion of the behavioral values of both Indian and European peoples can offer an explanation for the social and political implications of each particular contact situation.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For the discussion of Indian in colonial America, see William N. Fenton, Lyman H. Butterfield, and Wilcomb E. Washburn, American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957); Bernard W. Sheehan, "Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay," William and Mary Quarterly, 26 (1969), 267ff; Wilcomb Washburn's comments on the moral dimension's illusive perplexities are important--"Moral History of Indian-White Relations: Needs and Opportunities for Study," Ethnohistory, 9 (1957), 55ff.

[2]For the complex imagery of "savagery" in the European mind before contact, see Richard Bernheimer, Wild Men in the Middle Ages (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952); Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak, eds., The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972); Henri Baudet, Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); and see Roy H. Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), for post-contact views.

[3]A beginning has been made with Bruce G. Trigger's "Champlain Judged by His Indian Policy: A Different View of Early Canadian History," Anthropologia, 13 (1971), 85-114; Marcel Trudel, "La Rencontre des Cultures," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, 18 (Mars, 1965), 477-516; and George R. Healy, "The French Jesuits and the Idea of the Noble Savage," William and Mary Quarterly, 15 (April, 1958), 143-67.

Both James Ronda, "The European Indian: Jesuit Civilization Planning in New France," Church History, 41 (Sept., 1972), 385-95; and Cornelius Jaenen, "The Frenchification and Evangelization of the Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century New France," Canadian Catholic Historical Association, Report, 35 (1968), 57-75, argue that a major aim of the Jesuits was to "civilize" the Algonkian. Neither adequately accounts for cultural accommodation processes at work between the French and the Montagnais-Naskapi, Abnaki, Malecite, and Micmac peoples. Jaenen specifically argues in "Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century," Canadian Historical Review, 55 (Sept., 1974), 262, that there is an identifiable Indian point of view about Europeans though it seems likely that motivations and opinions changed from place to place, time to time, group to group, and person to person. Such categories must be distinguished. See H. Pertti and Gretel H. Pelto, "Intracultural Diversity: Some Theoretical Issues," American Ethnologist, 2 (Feb., 1975), 1-18; Anthony F. C. Wallace, Culture and Personality, especially Chap. IV, "The Psychology of Culture Change," (New York: Random House, 1961), 120-63; Social Science Research Council, "Acculturation: An Exploratory Formulation," American Anthropologist, 56 (Dec., 1954), 973-1002; Florence R. Kluckhohn, "Dominant and Variant Value Orientations," in Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry S. Murray, eds., Personality in Nature, Society and Culture, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1967); and in history, Robert Berkhofer, A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1969).

[4]The controversy is intimately connected with L. H. Gipson's view of the authoritarian and non-progressive character of the government of New France. See The British Empire before the American Revolution, V

(New York: A. A. Knopf, 1956), 340-41; Cameron Nish, Les Bourgeois-gentils-hommes de la Nouvelle-France, 1729-1748 (Montreal, 1968); Jean Hamelin, Economie et société en Nouvelle-France (Quebec, 1960); and Yves Zoltvany, The Government of New France: Royal, Clerical, or Class Rule? (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1971), 46-47.

[5]On Parkman, see Mason Wade, Francis Parkman: Heroic Historian (New York: The Viking Press, 1942); and William J. Eccles, "The History of New France According to Francis Parkman," William and Mary Quarterly, 18 (April, 1961), 163-75.

[6]Zoltvany considers this historical struggle in his The Government of New France; and see Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French Culture," 291; as well as Donald Boyd Smith, "French-Canadian Historians' Images of the Indian in the 'Heroic Period' of New France, 1534-1663," unpub. M.A. thesis (Quebec: Université Laval, 1969).

[7]Paula Gunn Allen, "The Mythopoeic Vision in Native American Literature: The Problem of Myth," American Indian Culture and Research Journal, I (1974), 14-16.

[8]See A. Irving Hallowell, "Temporal Orientations in Western Civilization and in a Pre-literate Society," American Anthropologist, n.s. 39 (Oct.-Dec., 1937), 647-70.

[9]In philosophical anthropology, see the work of Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), and his development of the phenomenological concept of the "between" in his "Dialogue," in Between Man and Man (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), 1-39. Robert Redfield's "Civilization and the Moral Order," in his The Primitive World and Its Transformations (Ithaca, N.Y.: Great Seal Books, 1957), 54-83, is important. Bertell Ollman's Alienation: Marx's Conception

of Man in Capitalist Society (Cambridge: The University Press, 1970), clarifies social relations in Marxian thought. And see W. Goldsmidt, "An Ethnography of Encounters: A Methodology for the Enquiry into the Relation between the Individual and Society," Current Anthropology, 13 (Feb., 1972), 59-78.

[10]Claude Levi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

[11]A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology," in Sigmund Diamond, ed., Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 21.

[12]A. Irving Hallowell, "Myth, Culture and Personality," American Anthropologist, n.s. 49 (Oct.-Dec., 1947), 544-56.

[13]See the Ojibwa stories "Nanabushu and Windigo," "Windigo and Misabe," the Cree tales "Wesakaychak and the Cannibal," and "The Culture Hero and the Cannibal," all in Morton I. Teicher, Windigo Psychosis: A Study of a Relation between Belief and Behavior among the Indians of Northeastern Canada, American Ethnological Society, Proceedings (Seattle, 1960), 25-26, 33, 34, 35, respectively. On Gluskabe, see "Glouseclappe," in Claude Melancon, Légendes Indiennes du Canada (Montreal: Éditions du jour, 1967), 15-18.

[14]"Gluskabe Overcome by Winter," in Frank G. Speck, "Penobscot Tales and Religious Beliefs," Journal of American Folklore (cited hereafter as JAFL), 48 (Jan.-Mar., 1935), 44.

[15]"Gluskabe Steals Summer and Overcomes Winter," ibid., 46-47; and see the Passamaquoddy story, "How the Master Found the Summer," in Charles G. Leland and John D. Prince, Kuloskap, the Master (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902), 210-12.

[16]The culture hero intervened against cannibals in other tales. See "Whiskey-Jack Man and Tseqa'bec Marry the Daughters of the Cannibal Woman," in F. G. Speck, "Montagnais and Naskapi Tales from the Labrador Peninsula," JAFL, 38 (Jan.-Mar., 1925), 6; "Tseka'bec, the Swing, and Two Beautiful Cannibal Girls," ibid., 15; "Tseka'bec Marries the Daughter of a Cannibal," ibid., 26-27; and see footnote 13.

[17]Kiwakwa (Abnaki), Chenoo (Micmac and Passamaquoddy), Gugus (Micmac), Windigo (Montagnais-Naskapi, Ojibwa, Cree), Atsen (Montagnais-Naskapi).

[18]See Speck's remarks in "Penobscot Tales," 13; and "Kew'kwe, the Cannibal Giant," ibid., 81-82; "The Story of the Great Chenoo, as Told by the Passamaquoddies," in Charles Leland, The Algonquin Legends (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), 246-47. Leland states that the "female Kewhqu' is more powerful than the male," ibid., 247. See "Atsen, The Cannibal Giant," "Montagnais and Naskapi Tales," 11; "Ketpusye'genau," in Elsie Clews Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," JAFL, 38 (Jan.-Mar., 1925), 56-59; "Gugus' Duel," ibid., 59-60; "Kiwakw," in W. H. Mechling, Malecite Tales, Canada, Department of Mines, Memoir 49 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 75-77.

[19]Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 5-6.

[20]F. G. Speck, "Ethical Attributes of the Labrador Indians," American Anthropologist, 35 (Oct.-Dec., 1933), 565-66.

[21]Quoted by Raymond D. Fogelson, "Psychological Theories of Windigo 'Psychosis' and a Preliminary Application of a Models Approach," in M. E. Spiro, ed., Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 79.

[22]Pearce, The Savages of America, 5.

[23]Speck, "Penobscot Tales," 13.

[24]Ibid., 66; Speck, "Montagnais and Naskapi Tales," 11; Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 59. In the nineteenth century case histories, windigo cannibalism was "usually directed against members of the individual's immediate family." Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 5.

[25]Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 233.

[26]Speck, "Penobscot Tales," 14.

[27]Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 249.

[28]Ibid., 252.

[29]In "The Girl Chenoo," a young man became the instrument through which the girl was changed into a cannibal. When she refused his offer of marriage, "she roused all that was savage in him and he gave up his mind to revenge." Ibid., 251. And see Speck, "Montagnais and Naskapi Tales," 6; Horace P. Beck, "Algonquin Folklore from Maniwaki," JAFL, 60 (July-Sept., 1947), 259-64; and "Taken-from-Guts," F. G. Speck, "Some Micmac Tales from Cape Breton Island," JAFL, 28 (Jan.-Mar., 1915), 61ff.

[30]Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 32-33.

[31]"Me Sah ba and the Windigo," ibid., 19. Another story, "Windigo and the Indian," tells of a "kind-hearted man" who struggled and won against a windigo who was his own brother to save a stranger. Ibid. These two stories, and the others later quoted extensively, indicate the source of power of the individual who could overpower the cannibal giant. It does not indicate that this was the source of shamanistic power in general. See Ruth Landes' Chapter 4 of her The Ojibwa Woman (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), 178-226, for a discussion of shamanistic power. Speck observed that the "conjurer can become the arch-criminal or the benefactor in his social sphere, according to the

motives that govern him." "Ethical Attributes of the Labrador Indians," 560.

[32]Quoted in Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 59.

[33]Ibid., 5.

[34]Speck, "Ethical Attributes of the Labrador Indians," 559-61; Julius E. Lips, "Public Opinion and Mutual Assistance among the Montagnais-Naskapi," American Anthropologist, 39 (1937), 222-28.

[35]The Ojibwa tales are "Giants: Why People Do Not Eat Each Other Nowadays," "Windigo, I," and "Weendigoes, I," in Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 22-23, 27-30, and 39-42. The other stories are: (Penobscot) untitled, quoted by Speck, "Penobscot Tales," 14; (Micmac) "The Chenoo, or the Story of a Cannibal with an Icy Heart," Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 233-44; (Passamaquoddy) untitled, ibid., 247-48; (Micmac) "Gugus' Duel," Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 59-60; (Malecite) "Kewakw," Mechling, Malecite Tales, 75-77.

[36]Speck, "Penobscot Tales," 14.

[37]"The Chenoo," Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 234.

[38]Ibid., 235.

[39]Ibid., 235-36.

[40]"Giants, Why People Do Not Eat Each Other Nowadays," Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 22.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]"The Chenoo," Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 238.

[44]"Giants," Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 23.

[45]"The Chenoo," Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 240.

[46]Ibid., 242-43.

[47]Ibid., 244.

[48]Ibid.

[49]The Jesuits report that the Algonkian held strangers in contempt. See, for example, Reuben Gold Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations (hereafter JR), 73 vols. (New York: The Pageant Book Co., 1959), XVI, 201. They also state that the attitude changed in the Montagnais-Naskapi mission village at Sillery. JR, XX, 89.

[50]Recently, the argument that windigo cannibalism has a nutritional base has attracted some attention. See Vivian J. Rohl, "A Nutritional Factor in Windigo Psychosis," American Anthropologist, 72 (1970), 97-101; and Jennifer Brown's response, "The Cure and the Feeding of Windigoes: A Critique," ibid., 73 (1971), 20-22.

[51]Charles A. Bishop, "Ojibwa Cannibalism," paper presented at the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, 1-20.

[52]Ibid., 14. And see Harold Hickerson, The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Study in Ethnohistory (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970); and his "Fur Trade Colonialism and the North American Indian," Journal of Ethnic Studies, I (Summer, 1973), 15-44, for a discussion of the social and cultural effects of rapid economic change.

[53]Thwaites, JR, XIV, 147; XVIII, 111; XXI, 115; XXV, 161.

[54]Ibid., X, 27. For Paul LeJeune's life and an astute evaluation of the nature of the Jesuit Relations as a source, see Leon Pouliot, "Paul LeJeune," in G. W. Brown, ed., Dictionary of Canadian Biography (hereafter DCB), I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 453-58.

[55]Thwaites, JR, XXXV, 21.

[56]Ibid., XXXVIII, 179-81.

[57]Ibid., XXIII, 29.

[58]Ibid., 31-33.

[59]Chrestien LeClercq, New Relation of Gaspesia, with the Customs and Religion of the Gaspesian Indians, William F. Ganong, ed. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1910), 112.

[60]Ibid., 112-15.

[61]Bishop, "Ojibwa Cannibalism," 5-8; and see Eleanor Leacock, "The Montagnais 'Hunting Territory' and the Fur Trade," American Anthropolotical Association, Memoir No. 78 (1954); Calvin Martin, "The European Impact on the Culture of a Northeastern Algonquian Tribe: An Ecological Interpretation," William and Mary Quarterly, 31 (Jan., 1974), 3-26; and Fred Eggan, "Northern Woodland Ethnology," in Jacob W. Gruber, ed., The Philadelphia Anthropological Society, Papers Presented on Its Golden Anniversary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 107-24.

[62]Note A. Irving Hallowell's remarks about the Jesuits' favorable reactions to the northeastern Algonkian. "Some Psychological Characteristics of the Northeastern Indians," in Frederick Johnson, ed., Man in Northeastern North America (Andover, Mass.: Phillip's Academy, 1946), 195-225. For Jesuit reactions to the Indians and winter, see Thwaites, JR, XIV, 137; XVI, 25; XXV, 111; XXVIII, 27-29; L, 177. The early Franciscans also recognized the importance of kin values. See Gabriel Sagard, The Long Voyage to the Country of the Hurons, George M. Wrong, ed. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), 71.

[63]Thwaites, JR, VI, 111.

[64]Ibid., 115.

[65]Thomas Grassman, "Joseph Manitougatche," in Brown, ed., DCB, I, 487-88.

[66]Thwaites, JR, V, 93.

[67]Ibid., VI, 143, and see especially Chap. V, "Of the Good Things which Are Found among the Savages." And also JR, XVI, 103; XXV, 111. On the role of the Hospital Nuns, see JR, XIX, 25; XVI, 25; and Kenneth M. Morrison, "That 'Earthly Paradise'--The Experience of the Canadian Ursulines: A Review Essay of Dom G. Oury's Marie de l'Incarnation," The American Review of Canadian Studies, 4 (Autumn, 1974), 76-77; Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French Culture," 270.

[68]Marie de l'Incarnation to her Son, Aug. 26, 1644, Dom G. Oury, ed., Marie de l'Incarnation, Ursuline (1599-1672), Correspondence (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1971), 221-22.

[69]Thwaites, JR, V, 171. For Algonkian views of trade, property, and the French, see Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French Culture," 266-67.

[70]Thwaites, JR, V, 105. LeJeune's reaction is more understandable for Frank G. Speck's statement: "Utilitarian, the Naskapi usages seem indeed to be; and, so far as I can judge, they arise from deliberately rationalized thought on the matter of social conduct." "Ethical Attributes of the Labrador Indians," 562.

[71]Thwaites, JR, IV, 147.

[72]Ibid., V, 169.

[73]G. F. G. Stanley, "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, 4 (Sept., 1950), 182.

[74]On the impact of liquor, see Andre Vachon, "L'eau-de-vie dans la Société Indienne," Canadian Historical Association, Report (1960), 22-23.

This paragraph, and the following, summarize Chapter IV: "The Rebirth of the Dream: The Creation of the French/Abnaki Alliance, 1630-1689," in my "The People of the Dawn: The Abnaki and Their Relations with New England and New France, 1602-1727," unpub. Ph.D. dissertation (Orono: University of Maine, 1975), 88-118.

[75]Thwaites, JR, XXXI, 187, 199.

[76]Ibid., 203.

[77]Ibid., 197. See Lucien Campeau's remarks on Abnaki recognition of Druillettes' power. "Gabriel Druillettes," in G. W. Brown, ed., DCB, I, 281-82.

[78]On the Jesuits' optimistic reaction to North America, see Healy, "The French Jesuits and the Idea of the Noble Savage," 143-67.

[79]Cornelius J. Jaenen deals at length with this conflict. See "The Relationship between Church and State in New France, 1647-1685," unpub. Ph.D. dissertation (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1962).

[80]Stanley, "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada," 185.

[81]For the extensive literature on Sebastien Racle, see my "Sebastien Rale vs. New England: A Case Study of Frontier Conflict," unpub. M.A. thesis (Orono: University of Maine, 1970), and Thomas Charland, "Sebastien Rale," in D. M. Hayne and A. Vachon, eds., DCB, II, 542-45.

[82]Sebastien Racle to his Brother, Oct. 30, 1689, Mss. letter, #1, Houghton Library, Harvard, n. p.

[83]Sebastien Racle to his Brother, Aoust 26, 1690, Mss. letter #2, ibid.

[84]On Bigot, see JR, LXIII, 107. A. G. Bailey, The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700, 2nd ed. (Toronto:

University of Toronto Press, 1969), emphasizes the destructive effect of the meeting. Andre Vachon, "L'Eau-de-Vie dans la Société Indienne," 22-32, and Calvin Martin, "European Impact on the Culture of a Northeastern Algonquian Tribe," 20, assert that the Jesuits' success depended on their undermining of traditional shaman. Martin goes further in asserting that the Micmac apostatized in accepting Christianity and European trade and that they repudiated traditional values and religious belief. See pp. 21ff.

[85]Leland, The Algonquin Legends, 249.

[86]"The Cannibal, Mamiltche'o, 'He who has a hairy heart,'" in Speck, "Montagnais and Naskapi Tales," 19-20.

[87]"The Witigo or 'Cannibal,'" ibid., 21; also printed in Teicher, Windigo Psychosis, 38-39.

[88]"Christ Creates: Gluskap Gives Rules," in Parsons, "Micmac Folklore," 88-90. This should not suggest that there were not tensions between the Jesuits and the shaman. On this point, see "Colloquies between the First Priest and the Indians," ibid., 90-91, and the story of "The Wizard and the Christian Priest," in Leland and Prince, Kuloskap, the Master, 242-43.

INDIAN WISDOM STORIES

by

Jerry D. Blanche

Eastern Washington State College

Cheney, Washington

Wisdom stories have played an active role in the continuing history of American Indian culture; and they continue to endure the bombardments of social, political, religious, and economic forces, both from within and without Indian culture and society. It is this long-term ability to stimulate thought, challenge, enlighten, and provide alternative viewpoints that make wisdom stories so valuable today. Few curricular materials are able to accomplish so much without the negative side effects of moralizing, judging, or providing too many simple answers.

After listening to several Indian stories about Coyote and other animal people, Denny Derosia, a Seattle, Washington, school boy, wrote his own story. The unedited version follows:

Once, far, far back when there were no people, the animals were peaceful ones and one of the most helpful ones was the great Coyote. The great Coyote had been helpful many times.

Well, one fine day the Coyote was taking a walk and he saw his brother the Fox. He liked his brother and his brother liked him.

As he went on walking he saw a bubbling brook. He bent down to get a drink when in the water he saw himself. He thought, "I wonder how the Eagle is? He stole my name. I would like an excuse to kill Eagle very much." But the Coyote couldn't find an excuse so he went on until he came to the Eagle's nest. He went up to the Eagle's nest but didn't find Eagle. He knew it was past lunch time. "Maybe he's in trouble." The Coyote called upon his magic powers and he got a ball. It showed the Wolf ready to eat Eagle. He thought he should help Eagle so he left running his fastest to kill Wolf.

Coyote ran ten miles, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty and he finally

got there and rested. Then he got ready but he had never fought a Wolf. He wondered if he could. So he went in the cave. The Wolf had him down. He called upon his magic povers and the Wolf turned to dust and blev away.

The Eagle said, "Why did you do that? I stole your name." "Well," said Coyote, "I was told when the Great Spirit told me to help anybody that I had to. That's why even nov I'd like to kill you but I can't for no reason."

Two days later the Coyote saw the Eagle killing fish so he ran and killed him.

Denny's story may not exactly parallel Coyote stories told by master Colville or Nez Percé storytellers, but Denny's story contains a certain amount of legitimacy. His account of Coyote's experience reflects a definite exposure to similar stories and the teachings inherent in them. For instance, Denny talked about a time when there were no "people," or human beings inhabiting the earth--a time when animals coexisted peacefully, as brothers. Coyote was portrayed in Denny's story as a helpful animal, an animal with special povers, and not a bloodthirsty, vicious, or stupid creature. Of course, Coyote was somewhat jealous of Eagle's name, but the story clearly conveys the idea that Coyote would not kill another animal on such a pretext. The story ends, however, with Eagle's death, resulting from his unnecessary killing of fish rather than Coyote's vengeance. There are also several other themes in Denny's story which reflect his knowledge of American Indian philosophy and of animal influence and behavior in the cycle of life. Traditional children's story characters, such as Dick and Jane and Dr. Seuss, obviously had little influence on Denny's story--even

more evidence of his exposure to Coyote and other Indian stories.

"Wisdom story" is a better reference term than "legend," "tale," "narrative," or the simple "story," because wisdom stories go beyond the singular intent to re-create real or imagined events and experiences. That is not to say that Indian wisdom stories are never fictions, or that some stories are not retained purely for their entertainment value. As Ella Clark pointed out in her book, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies:

> Many of the storytellers were superb actors. . . . Their facial expressions, voices, and gestures almost told the tale without words as they entertained eager listeners with amusing stories, tales of adventure and war, horror stories, and myths and legends of the wondrous days of long ago.[1]

Many Indian wisdom stories are full of wit and hilarity, too. Ohiyesa [Sioux] spoke to the point:

> There is scarcely anything so exasperating to me as the idea that the natives of this country have no sense of humor and no faculty for mirth. . . . I have often spent an entire evening in laughing with them until I could laugh no more. There are evenings when the recognized wit or story-teller of the village gives a free entertainment which keeps the rest of the community in a convulsive state until he leaves them.[2]

Wisdom stories have excellent entertainment value, especially for the young; but they are highly instructive, too. Clark stressed this in saying:

> Storytelling, however, was not for entertainment only. In the childhood of my principal Nez Percé informant, Otis Halfmoon, special

winter lodges were made partly underground, which were heated with hot rocks. There the most highly respected storytellers, one for the boys and one for the girls, taught the children in story form, preparing them for their lives as adults close to nature.[3]

According to Steiner, Mrs. Clara Moore, who lives on the Colville Reservation in Washington, recalled that "in her youth stories 'were unvritten texts in history, geography, nature study and ethics.'"[4] So, Indian wisdom stories can and should be appreciated on another level, one which symbolizes what is true, right, lasting, of good judgment, or wise. Naturally the predominant content of the stories is based upon "wisdom" from the American Indian tradition and value system, a broad term encompassing many tribal differences. Nonetheless, all tribes have individual oral histories which are closely related to their wisdom stories, and the stories are partial records of their unique religions, languages, customs, beliefs, and traditions. In Clark's words,

> Fables and other narratives gave moral and ethical instruction to as their elders sought to develop in them the ideals of the tribe. One of the sacred duties of the elders of the tribes was to hand down the traditions to the younger generations. Thus the winter storytelling preserved the continuity of the tribe by keeping alive its history and its significant traditions. The best storytellers were highly respected by their people; they were not only entertainers, but also teachers, historians, and guardians of the sacred ceremonies.[5]

Until recently there have been few printed copies of wisdom stories for reference and review, a fact which makes them even more impressive. This has apparently been an insignificant problem to the Native American, since the wisdom stories were and still are skillfully told

from memory. In 1891 an Oglala Sioux judge, Four Guns, contrasted the white man's insatiable desire for printed documents with the Indians' capacity for memory:

> The Indian needs no writings; words that are true sink deep into his heart where they remain; he never forgets them. On the other hand, if the white man loses his papers, he is helpless. I once heard one of their preachers say that no white man was admitted to heaven unless there were writings about him in a great book.[6]

Steiner's remarks were consistent with Four Guns':

> Modern man--book-weary, literate, multilingual--has been baffled and fascinated by the ability of the Indian to recite from his tribal memory. . . . But the illiterate Indian knew the unwritten history of things that had happened hundreds of years before as he knew his daily life. The mind of the Indian was a time machine. His memory was his reality.[7]

Since spoken words have always been special communicative devices to Indians, words have long been treated with respect and carefully developed skill, a fact so clearly demonstrated by tribal storytellers. Jones was certainly impressed when he wrote,

> My first impression on my trek into red man's story land was the immensity of the number of meaningful folk tales which their story-tellers had at their command. These seemed endless indeed. The second impression was the skill with which these fables, shall we call them, might be told. This last trait, of course, called for long experience and training--a feature often overlooked by those who only scan the surface of things.[8]

There are other ways, too, in which Indian wisdom stories differ

from traditional non-Indian American legends, tales, or stories. To begin with, wisdom stories are much older than non-Indian American history, and, specifically, much older than such events as Columbus' invasion or Tom Dooley's hanging. The most prominent characteristic of the stories is the fact that they were passed on word-of-mouth rather than in printed form and that some of the stories are literally centuries old. In fact, many wisdom stories have passed the proverbial judgment of quality, the test of time. Chief Elias Johnson [Tuscarora] attested to the longevity factor:

> On long winter evenings the Indian hunters gathered around their fireside, to listen to the historical traditions which had been handed down through their fathers and fathers' fathers, with scarcely any variation for centuries, kindling the enthusiasm of the warrior and inspiring the little child some day to realize similar dreams, and hand his name down to posterity as the author of similar exploits.[9]

A frequent criticism of resource materials used in classrooms and libraries throughout the nation is that these materials tend to indoctrinate as well as instruct, sometimes imposing standards of conduct, ethics, or some kind of morality upon their targets. The State of West Virginia, for example, has recently undergone an upheaval because of this controversial issue. Non-Indian stories typically have "happy endings," or conclusions which handily resolve all developed issues with few alternatives. Many children's stories tend also to do much of the thinking for the reader or listener by capsulizing the important concepts and even making arbitrary judgments about what certain characters should and should not have done. The "kiddie lit" section of any library is ample proof of the point that many young people are not

given adequate opportunities for self-discovery, thought, and individual interpretation of what they experience vicariously through reading and listening.

Indian wisdom stories fill this void described above. One primary value to wisdom stories is in their time-tested ability to stimulate deductive and inductive reasoning, enlighten, and provide alternative viewpoints. William Shelton, Snohomish chief, stressed the capacity of wisdom stories to stimulate thought and provide opportunities for inductive application and learning among Indian children. He said, "My parents, uncles and great uncles told me, in days gone by, stories that would create in me the desire to become brave, and good, and strong, to become a good speaker, a good leader."[10] In other words, Indian wisdom stories are not dogmatic, over-simplified, prescriptive teachings. They are highly individualistic learning experiences from which wisdom can be sought and self-discovery enhanced.

Native American thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs are clearly distinguished by their wisdom stories. They are also especially beneficial in teaching alternative viewpoints and concepts about all aspects of life to children, within and outside Indian culture. A very small list of specific concepts, principles, attitudes, and beliefs consistently found in wisdom stories indicate some ideas that children and adults alike can discover by experiencing the stories:

1. A fact clearly illustrated in most wisdom stories is that the Indian is not an ignorant, uncivilized, pagan savage. He is a human being who can be very, very good, and he can be very bad. He represents a bloodline, but his "Indianness" is also a matter of spirit. The Indian professes and lives according to traditions and principles which

have outlived his father and his father's fathers. Or, as Wissler said, "A favorite expression of the Indian . . . was that he knew only the ways of his fathers and that they were good ways."[11] Above all, an Indian is not a creature with red skin and long black hair.

2. One of the most provocative concepts conveyed by wisdom stories is that "different" means just that--different--not better or worse. This is an Indian thought, that everything can be looked at from many different perspectives, other than right/wrong, good/bad, positive/negative, etc. For example, in one of the Coyote stories, "The Beginning," Coyote at first believes that his name is inferior to that of Bear, Eagle, or Salmon. Later he realizes that his name is different but certainly not inferior to other names. In fact, Coyote, The Imitator, discovers that his name is quite descriptive of his way of life.

3. Indian thought and education also places emphasis upon decision-making in daily living. Everyone is taught to face decisions and to learn to make intelligent choices from among the alternatives. But the attitude toward decision-making responsibility is somewhat unique, in that Indians are taught that good and bad decisions are both possible, but not "wrong" decisions. The only wrong decisions are choices never made. This decision-making attitude is illustrated in another Coyote story in which Coyote is involved in an incident during which he puts sticks in his eyes to stay awake. Coyote is to be credited with an imaginative, creative decision, but certain negative side effects are obvious.

4. According to Indian perspective, everything is alive and has a spirit, including rocks, trees, water, wind, etc. In Edward Goodbird's terms, "We Hidatsas believed that this world and everything in it was

alive and had spirits; and our faith in these spirits and our worship of them made our religion."[12] Obviously, this explains why all natural phenomena are treated with dignity and respect. Many stories illustrate the point with young boys becoming men by seeking and finding special spirits which will accompany and protect them forever. Some find their spirits in animals, some in special places, and some in other inanimate objects. The Indian tries to win the favor or protection of all these living things in order to avoid natural calamities or hardships and to live harmoniously with all things. Indian wisdom stories consistently proclaim this value, according to Gridley:

> Though he recognizes in the story of the Wisconsin River the erosive powers of water and in the story of the formation of Florida the elemental forces of nature, yet there is a difference from the white man's recognition of these things. The water is not just water, but water with life. The elements are not just elements, but elements with life. And the stories are not mere indulgences of fancy, but events that actually transpired.[13]

The Indian, then, has more than an appreciation or respect for the land, water, and air. He worships them. The world is an extension of the Indian, and he is an extension of the world. The two are harmonious, inseparable, and unified.

5. The Indian does not live in a secret world. His mind is neither mysterious, nor incomprehensible, nor primitive. Yet, Indian philosophy does include a concept very difficult for non-Indians to comprehend--the concept of power. To Indian people, power is not an "earned" position of ascendancy over others; power is usually not associated with authority, control, or might. These meanings of power

put too much emphasis upon something given or something deserved from other people. Indian people view it as something that is developed from within man or nature. Specifically, power is the capacity to overcome human weaknesses or deficiencies without physical dominance. It is the ability of man, animal, or other natural phenomena to develop abilities, talents, and skills to their fullest. Not to be utilized by one man over another, power is usually developed to make survival and comfort possible for everyone, perhaps even to "heal." One may share his power with another; and, when possible, one may utilize the power of another creature to resist harm or discomfort. To be a good swimmer like the salmon or possess the endurance of stone are examples.

On the other hand, power is occasionally called upon to "zap" others, to make "bad medicine" (i.e., stick games) for others, or to satisfy jealous or vindictive longings. Family songs may have this kind of power. Primarily, though, the Indian concept of power does not reflect man's ability to control or dominate others. The power of the pipe is revealed in many wisdom stories and is a good example. The power of the pipe to achieve peace among warring tribes in Minnesota is a case in point:

> Weapons were cast aside and the nations that had been at war smoked together in friendship. When the pipe appeared, enemies came and went in peace. When the pipe appeared, thought of ill-will or of anger were banished. No other object was held in such great reverence.[14]

The Eagle is another example of power. He is the premier winged hunter. He has developed his potential to its fullest. The Eagle, as the stories show, is a powerful bird because he has overcome his own weaknesses, not because he has physical dominance over other winged animals.

Similarly, the Indian seeks the power of one who has achieved his fullest possible potential.

Carl Dentzel once wrote:

> Grouped around the hearth fires of their dwellings, the young and old loved to hear the tales relating to the entire concept of their being. Too few of these tales and orations have been remembered or recorded for the benefit of modern society. American life would have been richer, indeed, had our heritage from the American Indian been appreciated and preserved.[15]

How unfortunate it is that Indian wisdom stories are so commonly referred to in the past tense and that they are so frequently labeled as mere "tales." These entertainments and lessons are still very much alive and apropos today. They are unsurpassed among other resources and materials for their capacity to stimulate thought, self-discovery, and individual interpretation. And they are particularly useful and adaptable for cross-cultural experiences. Wisdom stories take you to the crossroads, but they do not insist that one path is better than another. One pathway may lend itself to traditional Western thought, another pathway to Indian tradition. What an exciting prospect to at least have a choice or to be exposed to something brand new! For most of us, such a choice is possible through Indian wisdom stories; and, in Frederick Turner's opinion, the rewards are worth seeking:

> The words of the Indian, then, are a potential source of cultural health for us. They are a way into another and necessary view of our world, and we need to take them seriously, not merely as "folklore."[16]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Ella E. Clark, Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), p. 24.

[2]Charles Hamilton, ed., Cry of the Thunderbird (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 68.

[3]Clark, Indian Legends, p. 24.

[4]Stan Steiner, The New Indians (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968), p. 118.

[5]Clark, Indian Legends, p. 27.

[6]Virginia I. Armstrong, ed., I Have Spoken (Chicago: Swallow Press, Inc., 1971), p. 131.

[7]Steiner, New Indians, p. 118.

[8]Louis T. Jones, So Say the Indians (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1970), pp. xiv-xv.

[9]Hamilton, Cry of Thunderbird, p. 32.

[10]Steiner, New Indians, p. 118.

[11]Clark Wissler, Indians of the United States (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1966), p. 307.

[12]Hamilton, Cry of Thunderbird, p. 73.

[13]Marion E. Gridley, Indian Legends of American Scenes (Northbrook, Ill.: Hubbard Press, 1939), p. 10.

[14]Ibid., p. 64.

[15]Jones, So Say Indians, p. x.

[16]Armstrong, I Have Spoken, p. xiv.

ALEX POSEY: CREEK STATESMAN, JOURNALIST, AND POET

by

Ruth Arrington

Northeastern Oklahoma State University

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

As was the mode of the day, Alex Posey kept a journal. On April 25, 1897, he commented, "Such a cool, clear day. . . ."[1] Five years later on April 24, 1902, he recorded this entry, "The heat is quite oppressive. Woods, hills and valley green."[2] He was describing weather in the same area, in what is now northeastern Oklahoma, where variety is still the rule for weather. Posey, a Creek Indian, was a man of variety, too--variety in his accomplishments. He never traveled far from his home near Eufaula in the Creek Nation during the thirty-five years of his life, yet his name and reputation spread across the United States. He was known as a statesman, journalist, and poet.

Alexander Lawrence Posey, who preferred to be called Alex, knew and used Creek folklore and references in his writings. He signed much of his writing as "Chinnubbie." In ancient Greek mythology, "Chinnubbie" was a hero with supernatural powers; but as time passed, his character changed and by the late nineteenth century he was "the evil genius." At least that was the way Posey identified his nom de plume.[3]

Posey's literary efforts started during his days as a student at Bacone Indian University located in the Creek Nation near what is now Muskogee, Oklahoma. Established in 1880, the school is still in operation. Among Posey's contributions to the school publication were poems based on legends; one was called "The Sea God," and another, about a warrior who assumed the form of a bear, was called "Fixico Yabola's Revenge."[4]

Not only did Posey make his debut in writing at Bacone, he got his start in statesmanship there. He was a student leader, and he attended community meetings where tribal problems were presented and discussed. He was elected to serve as a member of the House of Warriors, the lower

house of the Creek legislature, shortly after his graduation from Bacone. He was later appointed Superintendent of the Creek Orphanage. He was associated with several Creek schools and served as Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Creek Nation.

Early in the 1900's, he worked with the Dawes Commission as a member of an Enrollment Field Party. In this position Posey sought out the Creeks who had not signed up for land allotment. He tried to find those called Lost Creeks, who might be living in another Indian nation. The Field Party wanted to enroll all Creeks, including members of the Snake faction who resisted allotment and wanted to go on following the old ways. They were called Snakes because the English name of their leader was Crazy Snake. His Creek name was Chitto Harjo. Posey interviewed Harjo while working with the Enrollment Party. Harjo had not changed his mind. Although Posey felt that change was inevitable, he respected Crazy Snake, a man devoted to his cause, and even went so far as to write a poem of praise to him. It closed with the line, "I bow to him, exalt his name."

While working with the Field Party, Posey kept a diary in which he recorded some of his efforts to get the Snake people to enroll. On September 11, 1905, he wrote:

> Drive to vicinity of West Eufaula church--wrestle with Tom Pologu, a blind Snake Indian, on the enrollment of his daughter's children and fail in my purpose. The blind will not be led. Other Snakes I find "come across," as the saying goes.[5]

In his journal he recorded folk activities. For example, on September 5 he witnessed a stick ball game between Eufaula and Arbekas, about which he wrote: "It was the bloodiest conflict I ever witnessed.

. . . The game, or rather battle was witnessed by about 2500 people."[6] Creek stick ball was played much like the game of lacrosse, but the rules were Creek. Another folk custom was to build small low-roofed houses over the graves in their cemeteries. Posey mentioned seeing several of these of various sizes during his trips through the country. He described one graveyard on a farm owned by a woman:

> She had erected veritable houses, besides which the common Indian grave house would pale into insignificance. The house over her mother's grave is big enough to live comfortable in.[7]

In the journal he kept when he visited the Creek Orphanage, he recorded entries about the books and magazines he read, as well as the poems that he wrote. He noted that his non-Indian wife, Lovena, had made sofky, best described as the national dish of the Creeks. This was her first effort, and she was successful. Posey closed the account with this syllogism:

> No one but an Indian can make sofky;
>
> Lovena can make sofky;
>
> Therefore Lovena is an Indian![8]

How logical is the Creek!

Even the trip that ended in death for Posey was in connection with his role as a statesman. He and a friend had been to Muskogee on tribal business. As they returned to Eufaula by train, they were informed, when only three miles from their destination, that the tracks ahead had been washed out by the recent heavy rains. The two rented a boat to take them across the flooded North Canadian River, but the swift waters caused the craft to capsize. Posey's friend made it to shore, and Posey grasped the limb of an overhanging tree. A rope was thrown to

him, but his efforts to catch it caused him to be swept downstream. It was several weeks before his body was recovered. Knowing this story, readers of Posey's poetry find his poem, "My Fancy," to have a hauntingly prophetic quality.

> Why do trees along the river
> Lean so far out o'er the tide?
> Very wise men tell me why, but
> I am never satisfied;
> And so I keep my fancy still,
> That trees lean out to save
> The drowning from the clutches of
> The cold, remorseless wave.

The death of Alex Posey was a great loss to the new state of Oklahoma. Posey had assisted in the effort to create the Indian state of Sequoyah. As secretary of the Sequoyah Convention, Posey wrote most of the constitution for the proposed state. When the plan failed, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory were united. The constitution of the state of Oklahoma was modeled after the one written by Posey.

Alex Posey got his start in service to his people at Bacone, and that was where he started his work in journalism. He not only wrote for the student publication, he learned to set type. His home town newspaper, the Eufaula Indian Journal, carried a column called "Bacone Items" written by Chinnubbie.

The Indian Journal, the major newspaper published in the Creek Nation, began publication in 1876 in Muskogee and was later moved to Eufaula. Subscribers to the Journal knew of Posey, not only from "Bacone Items," but from the entries in the newspaper covering his

activities. Posey received a great deal of praise for his graduation speech, titled "Room at the Top." Later, Posey accepted a position with a firm owned by a leader in the Seminole Nation, and the editor exclaimed about the qualifications of the young man. When Posey became editor and publisher of the Indian Journal in 1902, the readers expected good results, and they were not disappointed. Circulation increased. Plaudits were published in other newspapers. The editors of the Muskogee Daily Phoenix noted that, "There is a freshness, a crispness, a novelty with each issue that is delightful and entertaining."[9] Perhaps the excellent reviews were a result of Posey's editorial policy which he stated:

> And now that the strenuous life is staring the red man in the face and his land is rapidly slipping from beneath his feet; now that the red man must needs dig his toes deep in the soil and bow his back to stay in the land which the Lord God has preserved unto him, the Indian Journal, true to its name as in the past, will continue to be the Indian's friend, espousing always the cause which it believes will rebound to his betterment.[10]

As an Indian, Posey made a superior contribution to his people, the Creeks, as well as Indians of the area with his "Fus Fixico's Letters." This series of letters, which appeared from time to time in the Indian Journal and were frequently reprinted in other newspapers, dealt with events that were part of the life of the full blood Creek. There were references to the allotment of land, criticism or praise, if it was deserved, of the government, conversations between Indians about the weather, their crops, all of which was written in the language of the full blood. A reader soon discovered that the seemingly stoic Indian

had a sense of humor. The names of prominent men of the day were often orally restated; for example, the Chairman of the Dawes Commission, Tams Bixby, was called Tams Big Pie; Secretary of the Interior, E. A. Hitchcock, was Secretary Its-cocked; and President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt, was President Rooster Feather.

"Fus Fixico's Letters" were full of Creek folk references. Sofky was mentioned in nearly every letter. In the first letter Posey described how the medicine man carried out the task of curing Fus Fixico's ills:

> He was just take his grubbing hoe and go out in the woods and dig up lots medicine anywhere. Then he was take his cane and blow in the medicine pot long time and sing little song with it, too.[11]

Posey used folk stories to explain contemporary ideas. He related the story of a rabbit who attended a meeting in which all the animals got together to try to settle the problem of food. Each animal was asked to select and then eat one special food. The squirrel selected nuts, the wolf "take meat been dead long time," and the rabbit selected the fruit of the sycamore tree. Since there is no such thing and the rabbit kept waiting for it to appear, he nearly starved. Posey likened the tale to the battle for the county seat between Eufaula and a neighboring town. In the letter published shortly before the problem was resolved, Posey stated that the rival town was "looking up in the tree o' politics an' get hungry for county seat fruit."[12]

When he made a trip into a fairly large town, Fus compared the game of billiards to the traditional game of stick ball.

> We was go in 'nother place and see big ball play on table that was has sacks to it. But they was not play ball like Injins do, 'cause

> they didn't had no feathers and tiger tails and paint and lots a fights. . . . They was just stand round and knock ball with sticks like hoe handle and laugh and cuss, maybe.[13]

Alex Posey was a well-known poet at the time of his death, but his works had not been published in book form. In 1910 his wife had her husband's poetry published. The book was republished in 1969 through the efforts of the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in Muskogee, the Okmulgee Cultural Foundation, and Posey's daughter. In the nearly one hundred poems, there are many references and themes from the folklore of the Creeks. In one poem, "Red Man's Pledge of Peace," the poet states, "I come from mother soil and cave." This is a specific reference to the folk belief that the Creeks originated from the earth.

The first poem in the book, "The Indian's Past Olympic," is a description of tribal ceremony. It is "the gala day" of the ripe corn. Feast preparations are underway. Posey describes the role of the medicine man:

> The prophet, plumed, slow taps the drums,
> Exclaims aloud: "O Warriors come
> And drink this noble drink I give."

Then comes the stick ball game. As soon as the ball is thrown into the air, the battle begins:

> True friendship's lost and foes contend.
> High to and fro the ball is thrown,
> And gaping wounds by war clubs torn,
> Gush torrents, streams of clotting gore.

In the evening after the bloody game is ended, the stomp dance starts with "the prophet" again, shaking 'the follow gourd." Men dance around

the central fire, joined by women, who have tortoise shells into which pebbles have been injected tied to their legs. Added to these sounds "the prophets chant their battle-lays" and on they circle until,

> Day blossoms crimson in the east
> And ends the dance, the play and feast.

Though the title, "The Indian's Past Olympic," may sound odd, it is a representative selection. Posey had learned Creek stories at home and Greek stories when he went to school. During the Golden Age, the Greeks celebrated with festivals; the Creeks still celebrate with festivals. Traditional gatherings for feasting, games demonstrating physical prowess, and dances for joy and for keeping old beliefs alive were a part of both cultures.

Posey's poetry abounds with one of the most significant themes in folklore--the emphasis on nature. He wrote poems about rivers and streams, about seasons, the elements, about the animals and birds, about the land. In one short poem, he pulls together a beautiful philosophy about the Indians' feeling for nature:

> I look up at the open sky,
> And all the evils in
> My heart the instant pale and die,
> For lo! I cannot sin!

This was Alex Posey, the Creek statesman, journalist, and poet. He used folklore in his writings because folklore was a part of his life. He believed in his people and expressed his pride and admiration for them when he wrote:

> All of my people are poets. . . . The Indian talks in poetry . . . the poetry of the fields, the sky, the river, the sun and the stars.[14]

Alex Posey was the living embodiment of that Indian.

FOOTNOTES

[1]"Journal of Alexander Lawrence Posey," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Winter, 1967-1968, p. 422.

[2]"Journal of Alexander Lawrence Posey," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Spring, 1968, p. 19.

[3]Poems of Alexander Lawrence Posey (Muskogee, Oklahoma: Hoffmann Printing, 1969), p. 49.

[4]Poems, p. 26.

[5]"Journal," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Spring, 1968, p. 7.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]"Journal," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Winter, 1967-1968, p. 409.

[9]Muskogee Daily Phoenix, July 18, 1902.

[10]Eufaula Indian Journal, January 2, 1903.

[11]Ibid., October 31, 1902.

[12]Ibid., April 24, 1908.

[13]Ibid., January 16, 1903.

[14]Poems, p. 53.

PART II

LATINO FOLKLORE

89

Part II

INTRODUCTION

by

James R. Parker

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

La Crosse, Wisconsin

Introduction

Latino folklore is as varied in its sources and concerns as are the people that it serves. The concerns that mold the constantly evolving folk traditions of the Chicano may differ from those of the Rican, but the same emerging acceptance of cultural pluralism that characterizes an interest in Latino culture permits the divergence within the Latino context between the Rican and Chicano folkways which creates variety. The differences are more apparent than real: both rely upon comparable folk sources to a lesser or greater degree, although Chicanos have an Indian heritage which colors their customs, for "to be Chicano is to be Indian and Hispanic. . . ." (E. A. Mares) Yet, whereas Ricans draw more heavily upon the Afro and Hispanic traditions, both are directed toward the preservation of identity and culture despite the differing traditions of Puerto Rico and Mexico. Neither the barrios of Sandoval's barrio bajo nor those of New York can contain that effort. In the broader view, the commonality of experience is greater than the differences between New York and Los Angeles might suggest.

Guillermo Lux attempts to define the root sources of Chicano folk literature in Spain and Mexico in his essay on "The Importance of Folk Literature in the Chicano Experience." The heritage of oral tradition is wealthy and forms the basis for that folk literature from the Siglo de Oro to the cuentistas and corridos of eighteenth century Mexico and twentieth century North America. The folk literature preserves and defines the people; it gives them self-esteem and worth--the strength to cope with and assert their rights in a society which requires that assertion.

Yet Chicano folk literature is so much broader than the cuentos or corridos. The leyendas and myths help account for a people's

present, help to form a world view, a cosmology, to make that present meaningful. In "Aztlán: The Creation of Myth in Chicano Literature," Richard Valdés explores the roots of myth in general, and Aztlán, "which describes the origins of the Chicano and his struggle for self-identity," in particular. The thread of Aztlán, with its many variations, runs through the essays, prose, and poetry of Tony Estrada and Rodolfo González, of Ricardo Sanchez and Mario Suárez, to the novels of Rivera. It helps make the Chicano experience more intelligible, for Aztlán becomes a root, a source of the preservation of Chicano identity.

The customs of a people which remain honored equally help preserve a culture and identity. In "Hispanic Wedding Customs in New Mexico--Yesterday and Today," Rosa Fernández Mines traces the origin of such customs in the Hispanic cultural tradition and their evolution and retention in the contemporary southwestern United States. The customs were reflected in the literature of the past and suggest that the traditions associated with courtship remain largely intact among many Chicanos today. Mines' study contends that the origin of the traditions are frequently unknown and that some of the earlier traditions are disappearing, all of which creates an imperative for their study.

The contemporary Rican finds the same dilemma despite the fact that the methods of Latino accommodation with New York may vary somewhat from those of Mario Suárez's El Hoyo. For the Rican poet or novelist, retention of cultural identity is a problem of a different sort, largely caused by the urban context and the cultural schizophrenia of Puerto Rico. Rodolfo Gómez's study of "The Paradoxes of Contemporary Puerto Rican Poetry" illuminates the problem of locating its concerns. Gómez contends that Puerto Rico's colonial status

subjects the poet to a cultural straitjacket as the United States attempts, in a classical imperial manner, to define that culture for the Rican. The consequence for many contemporary poets is that they must often struggle to liberate their folklore and culture from those restraints, just as Rican political leadership seeks to liberate the people from economic suppression and exploitation. The result is the emergence of a militant literary folklore, a developing tradition of resistance and dissent quite different than the traditional and orthodox folklore concerns, but no less a viable component of the people's cultural heritage.

Maria Torres explores the more militant aspects of this development in Rican folk literature imposed by contemporary imperatives in her investigation of the "Literature of the Barrio." Torres sees the evolution of revolutionary poetry as a developing, emerging component of Rican folk literature. Her analysis of Cruz, Luciano, and Pietri lies upon the assumption that all poetry is ultimately political and reflects a class bias. The Rican poetry of militance serves to examine the life styles of the people, as Luciano's poetry does as it examines the streets, or Pietri as he explores the Ricans who lose their identity.

The more traditional folkloric concerns and traditions are expressed in Lucy Torres' investigation of Abelardo Díaz Alfaro's short story, "El Baquiné." In Torres' study, "A Child's Wake," she explores the tradition of the velorio from its earliest origins in Africa to its contemporary form adapted historically, interspersing throughout the examples from "El Baquiné." Torres traces the Afro-Spanish heritage of the Rican folk practice. Torres uses the poetry of Palés Natos and the

painting of Francisco Oller to help in the search for the velorio as its practice evolved in transition, culminating her search with Díaz Alfaro's story. Like María Torres and Gómez, she shows that Díaz Alfaro's story exposes much more than the folkloric tradition of the velorio: it exposes the life of the Ricans in their search for identity, while combating the forces that oppress and bleed them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLK LITERATURE IN THE CHICANO EXPERIENCE

by

Guillermo Lux

New Mexico Highlands University

Las Vegas, New Mexico

In congress with the theme of this Conference on the minority experience, this paper, "The Importance of Folk Literature in the Chicano Experience," emphasizes the Chicano experience as it relates to New Mexico tradition, which is the oldest and the obvious point of departure in any study of Chicano culture. The primary purpose of the study is to review some of the salient points of Chicano folk literature, and then consider the importance of folk literature to Chicanos.

The evolutionary process from folklore and legend in the oral tradition into folk literature, and literature per se (the latter being a written record), is a slow one. At what point it does become literature is a difficult question to answer. Because of the uniqueness of the New Mexican ambience, Chicano folklore and folk literature are fused so they are inseparable and will be so presented in this study.

Today there are those who question the validity or existence of a Chicano literature, asserting that literature is literature and that content can include any subject matter or sub-culture. The very label "Chicano" is offensive to some, and yet it is worn as a badge of honor by others.[1] The use of "Chicano" connotes militancy in the minds of many of the people of northern New Mexico that have traditionally viewed themselves as "Hispano" or "Spanish-American." "Chicano" conjures up memories of Tierra Amarilla and the courthouse raid--violence. Chicano, while not precisely applicable at times, is used here because it is the term understood by the larger audience for which this study is made.

Literature, as we traditionally recognize it, did not develop in New Mexico, because for almost two and a half centuries that area was a very real frontier of New Spain (the name by which Mexico was known

before independence in 1821) and printing facilities were lacking. If it did not develop in the printed or written form, at least it did so in the oral tradition. The names of those who attempted prose or verse were few in number: Villagrá's history of Juan de Oñate's reconquest of New Mexico in 1598, and a drama written by one Capitán Farfán, again one of Oñate's men. Inadvertently, occasionally some individual's literary endeavor was retained in the written form and identified as his. For example, Don Miguel de Quintana of Santa Cruz de la Cañada was suspected of heresy by the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition. In collecting evidence against him, his poetry was saved for posterity.

Nonetheless, the colonists themselves did not produce written literature. The literature they produced was in the tradition of Spain of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. And that was the literature of this early period that has come down to us in the form of anonymous folklore and folk literature--through the oral tradition--just as our sixteenth century forefathers inherited that eleventh and twelfth century legacy. It did not come into being spontaneously. Rather, it was the deliberate production of some gifted individual to commemorate some occasion such as a wedding or a holiday. Additionally, of course, the author's name was lost in the transmission process of that work of art from generation to generation. In other frontier areas of the Spanish New World, where the European and the indigenous blended so often harmoniously, the same literary entertainment was typical. For example, in frontier Argentina as in New Mexico, where ranching and sheepherding were lonely ways of extracting a living from the land, to payar, to be able to take a guitar and compose verses, was a highly esteemed art. And countless verses by anonymous authors have come

down to us today.

Much of what came to New Mexico and which was then transmitted for centuries was Spanish, as opposed to the influence of Mexican literature from the Valley of Mexico, which has its beginning in the colonial period. Consequently, we can assert that the underlying basis for Chicano folk literature and the folk literature tradition within the Chicano experience is Spanish; or perhaps it should be restated to say that there is a Spanish patina to Chicano folk literature. (Later we will consider the effect of Mexican literature on that of New Mexico and the rest of the present United States Southwest.)

In the sixteenth century, the Spanish Siglo de Oro, or the Golden Age, Spain was the mightiest power on earth. Like Rome of centuries earlier, Spain transplanted her culture--her language, literature, and people--in the regions that came under her dominion. That culture was the intermingling of oriental culture brought in by the Moslems, Roman culture, Greek culture, and even Celtiberian influence. It was a harmonious blending of oriental and occidental brilliance.

In particular, this unique blending of Roman and Moslem Spain in the Iberian crucible produced the brilliance of the Siglo de Oro. In the tenth century, Castillian was spoken in Old Castile; by the fifteenth century it extended to all of Spain and eventually to America by the sixteenth century. This was the language of the Golden Age of Spain, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the epoch when New Mexico was colonized. It was a language that had reached its full development. The language of northern New Mexico was therefore the language of the Siglo de Oro, the language of Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca, Spanish literary giants. It is yet the language in which

the people of New Mexico and much of the Southwest express their maxims and proverbs, the only way to express oneself adequately. All of this dates from the Siglo de Oro. For more than seven hundred years, from the Moslem invasion in 711 A.D. until the end of the Reconquista (the Reconquest by the Christians) in 1492 when the infidel was expelled, Christianity and Mohammedanism warred for the soul of Iberia. With the discovery of the New World, the zeal for Christianity swept over the western hemisphere. For almost one hundred years before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Christian Spain built cities, cathedrals, and colonized a wilderness. The undisturbed roots of Spain reach deep into the history of northern New Mexico. The folk literature of northern New Mexico, then, is the oldest Spanish-based culture in the Anglo controlled areas of the New World.

For many reasons northern New Mexico remained undisturbed until about a generation ago, and primary among the many reasons is geographic isolation. Isolated in the mountain valleys of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, sayings (dichos), short stories (cuentos), and tales (leyendas) tell the ethnologists of today much about the stages of literary evolution of the region. Sparsely populated and inhabited by Pueblo Indians and Spanish-speaking people, this area allowed the two to coexist for centuries, each maintaining their own cultural integrity. The equivalent would be the isolated and sparsely populated regions of Appalachia, where much of eighteenth century England has been retained. (In other parts of New Mexico, miscegenation--culturally and ethnically--is much more pronounced.)

To analyze this folk literature, the cultural residue of the Appalachia of the Southwest, genre by genre, we must begin with the

cuento. Before the advent of television, especially on long winter nights, the old people and the professional cuentistas (like the cantador, the professional singer, or the poeta) related cuentos, or short stories, which they had heard from an earlier generation. It was a time when neighbors and relatives gathered to enjoy such an evening.

Derived from various sources, but basically Spanish tradition and indigenous peoples, there were four kinds of cuentos: the religious (moral or didactic), animal stories, stories of magic, and picaresque stories. Not to be disregarded was the indigenous source of cuentos. The Navajos and the Pueblos related to their young and the Spanish, and later Mexican settlers, stories that, with time, were incorporated into the Spanish tradition. They were stories about the conception of the world--creation myths--and legends about supernatural gods and folk heroes. Indian parents used them to frighten their children into obedience and to reward or punish their youngsters. They were stories about cultural heroes, some of whom, like Poseyemo and Dsilji Neyana, were similar to Jesus. There were the legends which are constructed around mythological beings and animals. In the case of the Indian, the transmission was through storytelling and song and dance. In the case of the Spanish settlers, storytelling was the more popular.

The cuentos of Spanish origin showed some oriental influence, largely attributable to the centuries-long Moslem occupation. This influence is especially apparent in stories of magic and enchantment. There are Cinderella tales in which jewels, a prince, cruel older sisters, a glass slipper, among other elements, appear to parallel the well-known version.

The picturesque tales are usually centered about some legendary

figure like Juan Tonto or Juan Bobo (John the Stupid) or Juan Catorce. Much like the famous Lazarillo de Tormes anonymous picaresque Spanish (peninsular) piece of literature, these local stories are episodic, incorporating a great deal of local color. The Spanish legend of Juan Catorce, a Paul Bunyan-like figure, varied from locale to locale; but he was always a huge man with a tremendous appetite, a good neighbor, and wood chopper. There are witch stories in which children are often told to beware of this or that old woman or man who was probably a brujo (a witch). There is the popular La Ilorona, the crying woman legend about a woman who mourns the death of her children. I recall well as a child the fear of being taken away by La Ilorona and how only the color of blue, which represents the Virgin, could protect you. In particular, such stories survive in the villages and small communities where town gossip (el chisme) is characteristic. Equally popular were the tales of lost treasure, especially those which date back to the 1680's, similar Indian uprisings, and lost gold mines. The religious cuentos, like the religious dramas discussed below, are intended to instruct and, as such, are Catholic.

However, today the abuelitos no longer can compete with the television for the attention of their grandchildren. For the lack of an audience, the cuentistas have disappeared. With the passing of the present generation, no one will be left to carry on the tradition. Such, it appears, is the price of acculturation.

Northern New Mexico also produced a genuine folk-sustained drama, a living tradition like the cuento. Only in New Mexico, of all the United States, is there to be found folk drama. Particularly rich is the religious drama. These dramas served a special function in the

religious life of the people. The nativity plays, for example, were performed in lieu of midnight Mass on Christmas Eve when the village did not have a priest to celebrate the Mass. An example here would be the "Coloquio de los Pastores." Consider also, for example, the "Three Kings" play: this play is the oldest in the Spanish language, dating back to twelfth century Spain. It is an example of how intensely religious was sentiment in the colonial period. A parallel example would be the devotion of the penitentes, a religious sect of devotees. While many of the secular folk dramas have undergone regional changes as the actors catered to a particular occasion or the times, this was not the case with religious dramas. They have not been altered significantly. The rezos (prayers), the alabados and alabanzas (hymns of praise), the cantos religiosos (religious songs), and the religious dramas continue unchanged largely because of their religious character, which few would want to change inasmuch as they represent religious tradition. Again, much can be found in common with Spanish religious autos and comedias (religious plays) of the Siglo de Oro.

Another important facet of Chicano folk literature is poetry. In the folk tradition of New Mexico, there is a tremendous appreciation for poetry. The romance, or ballad, and its present day form, the corrido, has always been immensely popular. Again, the romance of New Mexico evolved from the eleventh century epic pattern when individuals recited their poetry in castles and in the market places. Wherever people congregated, these itinerants entertained.

There are three basic types of romances in the New Mexican folklore tradition: as might well be expected, the religious; the nursery rhyme type sung to children; and the episodic type composed and

sung to commemorate some tragic theme. Within literature, all three are classified as the romance vulgar, the ballad composed by the man on the street. Being of this nature, naturally the contemporary themes of the day are subject matter for the romance, for example, the "Ballad of Tierra Amarilla," commemorating the events of 1967. There are innumerable such examples. Romances and corridos are composed for all kinds of events, from the election of a governor to the eulogizing of some local popular figure.

Corridos are recited or sung on the street corners and in the pulquerías and the cantinas (local bars). They are sung to commemorate the opening of a new place of business and to praise popular leaders. Fiestas are the locus of new corridos. The cantador de corridos (singer of corridos) demonstrates a new and different mode of expression. The common man is the hero, and generally he is misused by the Establishment. It is a story that is well known to the man on the street and hence one to which he easily relates. The cantador sings of life on the street. Bandit heroes and revolutionary figures are typical themes. Today, in the day of television and radio, the corrido is sung daily in the media in Mexico and New Mexico alike, with equal gusto. These are a unique blend of old themes, the old ballads, and the new.

Earlier it was suggested that, on that Spanish literary base dating from the sixteenth century, much has been placed that was also Mexican. Within the Southwestern Chicano experience, part of our Mexican heritage is the corrido, which in Mexico replaced the romance some time before independence from Spain in 1821, while the present-day United States Southwest was yet part of New Spain. By the end of

the colonial period, the corrido had become increasingly popular. In New Mexico it was equally and enthusiastically adopted as, among other things, a communication medium for the dissemination of news. Today for the people who speak little or no English, it continues as a significant Spanish language vehicle for information of political news. The corrido continues to be the single most widely accepted form of Chicano folk literature throughout the Southwest, in rural areas and in the city barrios alike. This re-emphasizes the strong Mexican influence of the Mexican 1910 revolutionary period on the Southwest. Many Mexicans came to the United States in this period and amalgamated with the Mexican people who had been annexed with the territory in 1848. A common bond immediately existed through the corrido. An important indicator of cultural survival will be in the future of the corrido: it will continue to flourish or diminish as the Americanization of the Chicano succeeds or stagnates.

While some authors have attempted to compile collections of corridos, they must remain incomplete inasmuch as they are continually being composed. Corridos remain in the minds and hearts of the people, a people which resists being definitively organized, being computerized.

What then is the significance of folk literature in the Chicano experience? In the last decade, cultural pluralism has become increasingly accepted. No longer does mainstream society subscribe to only the melting pot concept that dictated that all minorities would become shaded Anglo-Saxons. Cultural self-determination is recognized to be one of those basic inalienable rights for which whites and minorities have fought several major wars. The problem is that, until about a

decade ago, blacks had by and large lost their cultural identity and had adopted a rendition of white culture. They had to regain it and are striving to do so now. Native-Americans were retaining theirs with varying degrees of success. Chicanos, because so much had to do with language, were from 1848 to about 1940 being effectively swept into the vortex of modern mainstream Anglo-American society. The problem, once again, had to be how to regain or how to retain and re-educate minority peoples in their own culture.

Bilingual education has done much to reinstate the culture of the Chicano; but bicultural education, which is much more political, is by definition much more controversial and, therefore, more difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, it must be through the systematic reinstatement of the culture of the Chicano that self-esteem will be achieved. Folklore, folk literature, and folkways are an integral part of bicultural education.

An important part of bilingual education, bicultural education, and cultural heritage is this folklore-folk literature-folkways troika. Folkways demonstrate a way of life that exists in the outlying villages of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, the Upper Río Grande, and the barrios of East Los Angeles. Ironically, it is the tourist that recognizes this way of life. Recognition of the excellence of the cuisine of New Mexico should not depend upon the tourist's palate. Veterans Administration and Farm Home Administration financing for adobe construction should not be dependent on a decision by some eastern Anglo bureaucrat who does not understand our mud mansions. It is the artists of Ranchos de Taos and Santa Fe that brought impetus to New Mexico village arts, again, non-Chicano external forces and influences.

These folkways are important because they define us. Whether or not they are accepted by the outside cultural world is not relevant.

The Chicano experience includes important life rites, baptisms, fiestas, compadres, casorios (wedding ceremonies), religion, birthdays or saints' days processions, the more formal afternoon meriendas where chocolate and wine and little cakes are served, the penitentes, posole, mayordomos, barrios, mula that tie Chicanos to the beliefs, customs, and folk literature of Spain, Mexico, and the Hispanic world.

When we speak of cultural heritage and bicultural education, we refer to much more than a superficial, elective educational presentation in the schools designed to entertain. Chicano cultural heritage, of which folk literature is an integral part, reunites a stratum of the populace of the Southwest with the cultural tradition of Latin America, the people south of the Río Bravo (the Río Grande), the cactus curtain that has been so artificially and arbitrarily imposed!

The institutions of society accept the value of information exchange and cognitive development but tend to disregard the emotional and affective growth of individuals and peoples. One prescription for Chicanos states that the mature, non-militant member exists in direct ratio to the whole self-image he has of himself. The less he accepts imposed stereotypes about his people, the more emotionally secure he is. Chicano folk literature portrays the requisite mirror image to enhance that healthy and adequate self-image. It adds to that sense of being, to that perspective that makes it possible for Chicanos to place themselves in proper context within mainstream society. That sense of being, sense of worth, is vital.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For further information on this polemic, see Guillermo Lux, "A La Raza Typology," published by ERIC, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico (Spring, 1975).

AZTLÁN: THE CREATION OF MYTH IN CHICANO LITERATURE

by

Richard A. Valdés
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma

Jorge Luis Borges concludes one of his essays with the following statement: "For in the beginning of literature is the myth, and in the end as well."[1] Chicano literature is no exception. The intent here is to study the function of myth in literature, specifically the role which the myth of Aztlán plays in Chicano literature.

The term "Chicano literature" refers to the literature written by authors of Mexican, i.e., Indian-Spanish, descent living in the United States. They may be recent immigrants or the descendants of the original colonizers of the area. "Chicano" is a cultural, rather than a racial, term. Mario Suárez noted that while "the term chicano is the short way of saying Mexicano, it is the long way of referring to everybody."[2] The term "Chicano literature" refers to the literary works of the Mexican-Americans--Chicanos--written after 1850 in the United States. This literature is not restricted to works in the standard genre, but includes any examples of the "imaginative use of language to interpret human experience."[3] This includes graffiti, oral traditions and written works in Spanish, English, or any of the mixtures of the two, or dialects spoken by Chicanos: Pocho, Pachuquno, Caló, etc.

Myth is necessarily fundamental to literature: literary expression is intelligible and meaningful only insofar as it is the expression of human reality--the reality of human experience. In this sense, literature corresponds to myth, in the Platonic sense of the word, as an artistic expression of a reality.

The word "myth" is used here, not in the sense of a "fable," "invention," or "fiction," but, in the words of Mircea Eliade, "as it was understood in the archaic societies, where on the contrary, 'myth' means a 'true story' and beyond that, a story that is a most precious

possession because it is sacred, exemplary, significant."[4] Given this definition, a myth is something living "in the sense that it supplies models for human behavior, and by that very fact meaning and value to life."[5] A myth presents, even in its most primitive forms, a cosmology that accounts for the present state of affairs according to a sacred story: it tells what occurred *in illo tempore* to the ancestors of the present people. Those ancestors may have been mortal or divine, but in either case were superior to the present people and, therefore, held as exemplary.

These exemplary actions performed by those who preceded the current epoch establish archetypes by which the present society can pattern their lives. As archetypes, they present a collective experience which transcends the experiences of any individual. They supply a unifying factor to the experiences of each member of the group, giving him a sense of identity and a place in the universe. Among primitive peoples these myths form a cosmology and a set of rituals or religious practices. Myth, however, is not only the world view held by primitive man for want of a body of sure and useful knowledge, it is also the view to which sophisticated man turns when he grasps the limits of that knowledge and despairs of truth.

Myth supplies a sacred truth which has a permanence that empirical facts cannot have. Thus, it satisfies an innate need for man and is a *natural metaphysic of the mind*, as Wilbur Urban has said.[6] It is a symbolic postulation of those entities which are essential if we are to round out our experience and make it intelligible. It is in the form of a *philosophia perennis* that we shall consider the myth of Aztlán: the postulation of a metaphysic which explains the reality which

underlies experiential life.

Myth, however, goes beyond the natural metaphysic of the mind of which Urban spoke. The latter "rounds out our experience and seeks to make it meaningful or intelligible . . . ,"[7] but myth has a sacred reality as well. One of the necessary structural attributes of a natural metaphysic is that it be value oriented. Urban rejects the view asserted by logical positivists that reality and values are qualitatively different and cannot be entailed by each other. For Urban, a metaphysic must be based upon values: metempirical entities must be based on axiological axioms. Empiricism cannot yield answers to metaphysical questions.[8] Urban insists that ontology must be based on the given value system. Myth goes beyond this by denying the ultimate reality of experience and postulating sacred reality on what happened in illo tempore. Myth does not tell a man what exists now, but rather what existed in mythic time. The origin of today's events and entities is found in that sacred time.

Myth does not operate under the normal rules of logic. As we shall see throughout this study, myth, as well as literature, do not adhere to the rules of cause and effect or discursive thought, but operate under the rules of magic where affinity or resemblance is a valid cause and ritual is necessarily true. The underlying thought process for poetry, myth, and religion is metaphorical. Ernst Cassirer finds myth and language both to be derived from the same form of mental conception: "It is the form which one may denote as metaphorical thinking . . . ."[9] He later adds: "Myth, language and art begin as a concrete undivided unity, which only gradually resolved into a triad of independent modes of spiritual creativity."[10] Although discursive

language developed from primitive mythic language, art retained the original creative power of language. Cassirer says:

> For lyric poetry is not only rooted in mythic motives as its beginning, but keeps its connection with myth even in its highest and purest products. . . . The spirit lives in the word of language and in the mythical image without falling under the control of either. What poetry expresses is neither the mythic word-picture of gods and daemons, nor the logical truth of abstract determinations and relations. The world of poetry stands apart from both, as a world of illusion and fantasy--but it is in this mode of illusion that the realm of pure feeling can find utterance, and can therewith attain its full and concrete actualization.[11]

Aztlán is the myth which describes the origins of the Chicano and his struggle for self-identity. More than a struggle to discover his identity, the Chicano's effort has been to preserve his identity, and all that this entails, in the face of the menace of the "great melting pot" and a white, Anglo oriented society which denies the value of the Chicano heritage. The school teacher who reprimands the child for speaking Spanish, the society which views anything "foreign" as inferior, and the whole materialistic value system which negates the spiritual values of a people have worked to change the Chicano: to have him deny his mestizo race, his Spanish language, and his moral and religious values. In the face of this cultural opposition a consistent voice has been raised by the Chicano--in English, in Spanish, and in Pachucano. The voice cries out his sorrows and sings his joys, but in all cases it insists on its authenticity.

This demand for cultural identification, and especially for

integrity on the part of the Chicano in his relation to Aztlán, is one of the main ~~themes~~ of Chicano literature. Tony Estrada poignantly speaks of this desmadrazgo--deculturalization--in his "Letter to Society":

> You tell me I am a criminal. You say that what I am is no good. That I should be like you so that I may be a good citizen.
>
> I have been told these things all my life. My teacher doesn't want me to speak Spanish because it is no good. I should not be a Catholic because it is no good. I should not have brown skin because it is no good. I should not be so loyal to my friends because it is no good. I should not be so clannish because it is not the American way.
>
> I now speak only English, I am no longer a Catholic, I have quit being loyal to my friends, and I am no longer clannish. I have changed everything but the color of my skin. And what have I become; a brown man who has no belief in God, cannot speak his parents' language, who has become a traitor to his friends and an outcast of my people.
>
> I have tried to be like you and now you tell me that I am a criminal. Isn't this what you wanted, or is it because I couldn't change the color of my skin that I am still no good.[12]

Estupinián expresses some of the same sentiments but from a perspective that is almost diametrically opposed. He has found his identity:

> "Sonido del Teponaztle"
> Y antes de llamarme Chicano . . .
> there was a mirror
> in my guts that could not

be put down
with light penetrated
through the years
of mi madre es . . . ?
Would you believe for
years I was one of five
Spanish boys at the end of the block
y
"los wikens" habia
parranda.[13]

Aztlán, "the land to the north," or "the land of the white reeds," was the land from which the Aztecs originated.[14] William Willoya and Vinson Brown state:

> Some believe the land of Aztlán was located in the valley of the lower Colorado River in the present day United States. In the vision of the Emperor Motecuhzoma which is as much folklore as prophecy, the Aztec ruler forecast the day when his descendants "will rise up"--"the newly risen tribes, like trodden grass"--and there will be a "new birth."[15]

The anthropological or historical reality of Aztlán, however, is irrelevant. The Aztlán of which Chicano literature speaks is a hypostat which has a different kind of reality: a sacred reality.

Valdés and Steiner, who cite Willoya and Brown, go on to say:

> I know the children of the Aztec, crushed now, will live and more--after ages of wrong suffered by them, they will rise up and take their place--a place of splendor--amongst the deathless nations of the earth. What I was given to see was revelation. Cherish these words,

O Tula; repeat them often; make them a cry of the people, a sacred tradition; let them go down with the generations, one of which will, at last, rightly understand the meaning of the words FREEDOM AND GOD, now dark to my understanding; and then, not till then will be the new birth and new career.[16]

They then cite the expression of this renaissance in El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán:

In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage, but also of the brutal "Gringo" invasion of our territories: We, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán, from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of our birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.

We are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows and by our hearts. Aztlán belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, gather the crops, and not to foreign Europeans. We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the Bronze Continent.

Brotherhood unites us and love for our brothers makes us a people whose time has come and who struggle against the foreigner "Gabacho" who exploits our riches and destroys our culture. With our hearts in our hands and our hands in the soil, We Declare the Independence of our Mestizo Nation. We are a Bronze People with a Bronze Culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the Bronze Continent, We are a Nation, We are a Union of free pueblos, We are Aztlán.[17]

Aztlán, however, is more than a political slogan or the call to rally of a socio-political movement; it is the myth whose content lies outside experience but which gives ultimate reality to that experience. Chicano literature, insofar as it is an aesthetic creation rather than a social document, seeks to create a hermetic world. It is a world which parallels and reflects experiential reality, but one which finds its verification in aesthetic, not empirical, criteria.

The original home of the Chicano was Aztlán, according to the myth, and Aztlán is his patrimony, his origin, his destiny, and his creed. Aztlán's reality is created by naming it. Ernst Cassirer explains this process in the essay, Language and Myth:

> After God has created all the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air he brings them to man, to see what he will call them. "And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." (Gen. 2:19) In this act of appellation, man takes possession of the world both physically and intellectually--subjects it to his knowledge and his rule.[18]

In the same manner, the Chicanos have named their home Aztlán. This was their land given them by the Sun, their creator, in the fifth age of the Sun (Quinto Sol). As myth, Aztlán is not restricted by geographical limitations; its boundaries are spiritual.

Lydia R. Aguirre defines the extent of Aztlán in The Meaning of the Chicano Movement:

> In our search for identity, we are researching and I feel, perhaps creating, the concept of Aztlán. Supposedly, we are descendants, through our Indian heritage, of the native peoples of the Southwest. The Aztlán people had a civilization that is still with us in a

modified form through Mexican-Spanish influences. Aztlán lives in any land where a Chicano lives: in his mind and heart and in the land he walks.[19]

Chicano literature is an expression of the reality of the Chicaro, not only in the themes it considers, but in the world view which serves as its base. Chicano literature need not be concerned with farm workers or Pachucos in the barrio to express the reality of the myth of Aztlán.

The Aztlán myth is expressed both in the world view of the Chicano authors and in their themes. Francisco Jiménez considers some of the principal themes expressed in Chicano literature in his article, "Chicano Literature: Sources and Themes." Jiménez explains: "In their writing, Chicanos define themselves in terms of their past and their present. The former they view with pride, the latter with anguish and dissatisfaction."[20] Among the views which express this identity is their view of themselves as heirs of two cultures: the Indian and the Spanish. If there is an almost exclusive emphasis on the Aztec or Mayan origins, it is partly because this element of their past has often been denied to them. They have been labeled Spanish-Americans or Spanish-surnamed Americans, ignoring that they are the children of Malinche and Cortés, as Octavio Paz has noted, offspring of the Indian raped by the Spaniard.[21] In terms which most Spanish-speaking readers would find strong, Paz speaks of the essential character of the Mexican as being quite different from that of the Spaniard in that "el hijo de la chingada" is the fruit of a violated woman.[22] The shame for and denial of the Indian maternity of the Chicano is viewed as an attempt to deny his identity: an attempt to which the

Chicano author reacts defiantly. Rodolfo "Corky" González writes in his epic poem, I am Joaquín/Yo soy Joaquín:

> I am Cuauhtemoc.
> proud and noble,
> leader of men,
> king of an empire
> civilized beyond the dreams
> of the gachupín Cortés,
> who also is the blood,
> the image of myself.
> I am the Maya prince.
> I am Nezahualcoyotl,
> great leader of the Chichimecas.
> I am the sword and flame of Cortés
> the despot.
> And.
> I am the eagle and the serpent of
> the Aztec civilization.[23]

For the Chicano author his mestizo race is a part of his identity and his pride. The Spanish element is obvious in his name and his language, in his religion, and in many of his customs. He asserts proudly and defiantly his Indian heritage, but his patrimony as one of Montezuma's children goes beyond race or blood. In an introduction to an article by Andrés Segura, E. A. Mares observes:

> Ser Chicano es ser indio e hispano--no se trata de estupideces raciales sino de herencias culturales. Bien conocida es la herencia europea; menos conocida la herencia indiana. . . . Lo vital--la manera

de ser lo que somos nos viene, de una parte de la experiencia radical que vivimos hoy día, y de otra parte, de la herencia cultural que nos viene acumulando desde hace muchos siglos. Con el triunfo de la astucia y el poder militar de Cortés sobre los Aztecas se inició también esa corriente de civilización occidental. La llegada de los españoles fue nada menos que un enorme desastre para los pueblos indios del continente americano. El egoísmo conquistador (algo muy europeo si no universal) trató de destruir, y logró interrumpir, un largo proceso civilizador que los indios venían elaborando desde tiempos remotos. Porque hubo en México-Tenochitlán una gran civilización y cultura nahuatl con hondas raices filosóficas-religiosas y científicas, . . .[24]

It is these deep philosophic-religious, i.e., mythic, roots which form not only the themes, but also at times, a motif presented symbolically in a pars pro toto sense. The mythic meaning of Aztlán, not only as the homeland from which the Chicano comes, but, especially, as the heritage and destiny of the Chicano, is an essential symbol in Edward Tafoya's very short work, "You can't drive to Aztlán." The word "Aztlán" appears only in the title, but the whole mythical concept of Aztlán is present, underlying the conclusion to the work: "Chuy cried out as he turned the ignition and it doubly dawned on him that the truck was out of gas and that he would never be able to move his life one inch from where he was parked."[25] The moral of the story is important, not for its didactic or moralistic message, but for the poetic impact it adds to the conclusion. The concept of Aztlán as the home and the destiny of the Chicano carries with it the responsibility and obligations to discover his true identity and pursue the destiny implied therein with integrity. This whole set of concepts involving

spiritual values, personal integrity, and a moral code, albeit radically different from that of the myths of the Anglo society, underlie the irony of the work. It is the same mythic ideology of Aztlán that underlies the irony in Tony Estrada's "Letter to Society" which we considered above.

Aztlán is also what Ricardo Sanchez had lost in "We were lost . . . ." He and his companion sought to escape the "societal way of life," and they knew not where to turn: the mountains swarmed with hunters, and the "society" they sought to escape appeared to be ubiquitous. He writes:

> We debated as many alternatives as came to our minds. Nothing seemed right. Just when I had made up my mind to write the final stroke to my rejection of the system, a harsh voice broke through the patterns of my thoughts. "That will be $6.50. Cash or charge?"
>
> I hurriedly dug out my wallet, silently handed the attendant a credit card, and unseeingly waited in my car to sign the chit. I signed for the gas, drove out of the station, and resigned myself to being lost for the rest of my life.[26]

In both Sanchez and Tafoya's stories, Aztlán is not a geographical location nor a physical place; in its mythic sense, it is a spiritual reality which the Chicano finds in himself and his carnales.

The setting for this spiritual reality is usually the barrio, but that barrio can be in El Paso, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Kansas City. The reality of Aztlán occurs when the mythic requisites are met. These are the same factors which make the barrio a regenerative place for the Chicano. As is explained by Mario Suarez in "El Hoyo," the barrio, in this case, El Hoyo, "is not the desperate outpost of a few families

against the world. It fights for no causes except those which soothe its immediate angers. It laughs and cries with the same amount of passion in times of plenty and of want."[27] Yet there is a quality, a spiritual quality, which gives the Chicano the security of home. In his poem, "Soledad," in which he cries out the spiritual anguish of Soledad prison, "Soledad means solitude in Spanish, to me it means differing levels of interminable deaths . . .," Ricardo Sanchez contrasts the spiritual barrenness to the "reality of existence" in Aztlán:

> . . .
> soledad
> inundated with turmoil,
> and my identity's lost . . .
> . . .
> o,
> mi barrio/chicano,
> my other life
> show me,
> tell me
> once more
> of my peasant origin;
> give me a happy, canorous
> grito . . .
> damn,
> make these chains break!
> soledad,
> you lied!
> no solitude here,

> just tormented souls . . . no,
> not souls.
> . . .[28]

From the few examples given, one can conclude that Aztlán, like most myths, includes many variations, but is unified in a set of values held sacred which make experiential life intelligible, and provide a coherent, albeit varied, world view which serves as a basis for the artistic expression of the Chicano. It is this world view which integrates most Chicano literature into that classification. It is also this world view which gives unity and integrity to Tomás Rivera's Y no se lo trago la tierra. An analysis of this work lies beyond the scope of the present study, but the values, ontological views based on Aztlán, appear in the viewpoint of the narrator as he presents glimpses of life in a Chicano world. Aztlán is not a restriction for the Chicano author, but rather a metaphysic which makes intelligible and coherent the myriad experiences which constitute the basis for Chicano literary expression.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jorge Luis Borges, "Parable of Cervantes and the Quixote," Labyrinths, trans. by Donald Yates and James E. Irby (New York, 1964), p. 242.

[2]Mario Suárez, "El Hoyo," Literatura Chicana: texto y contexto, Antonia Castañeda Shular, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Joseph Sommers, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), p. 154.

[3]Francisco Jiménez, "Chicano Literature: Sources and Themes," The Bilingual Review, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January-April, 1974), p. 1n.

[4]Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality (New York, 1963), p. 1.

[5]Ibid., p. 2.

[6]Wilbur Urban, Language and Reality (London, 1939), pp. 685-729.

[7]Ibid., p. 686.

[8]Ibid., p. 723ff.

[9]Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. by Susanne Langer (New York, 1946), p. 84.

[10]Ibid., p. 98.

[11]Ibid., p. 99.

[12]Tony Estrada, "Letter to Society," Literatura Chicana: texco y contexto, p. 32.

[13]Estupinián, "Sonido de Teponaztle," El espejo/The Mirror: Selected Chicano Literature, Octavio Romano and Herminio Rios, eds., fifth ed. (Berkeley, 1972), p. 194.

[14]William Willoya and Vinson Brown, "The Children of the Aztec," Warriors of the Rainbow (Heraldsbury, Cal., 1952), as quoted in Aztlán: An Anthology of Mexican American Literature, Luis Valdez and Stan Steiner, eds. (New York, 1973), p. 401.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., pp. 402-03.

[18]Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 83.

[19]Lydia R. Aguirre, "The Meaning of the Chicano Movement," Social Casework, Vol. 52, No. 5 (May, 1971), p. 261.

[20]Jiménez, "Literatura Chicana," p. 10.

[21]Octavio Paz, El laberinto de la soledad (Mexico, 1959), p. 59ff.

[22]Ibid., p. 72.

[23]Rodolfo "Corky" González, I am Joaquin/Yo so Joaquín (New York, 1972), p. 16.

[24]E. A. Mares, "Introducción," an introduction to "Continuidad de la tradición filosófica en las dandanzas de Concheros," by Andrés Segura, El Cuaderno de vez en cuando, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 16. The English translation is: "To be Chicano is to be Indian and Hispanic--this does not refer to racial stupidities but to cultural heritages. The European heritage is well known; the Indian heritage is less so. . . . The essence of life--our manner of being what we are comes to us, in one part from the radical experience which we live today, and in another part, from the cultural heritage which we have been accumulating for many centuries. With the triumph of the cunning and military power of Cortes over the Aztecs the western tradition of civilization also began. The arrival of the Spaniards was no less than a disaster for the Indian peoples of the American continent. The conquerors' egoism (something very European if not universal) tried to destroy, and managed to interrupt, a long civilizing process which the Indians had been elaborating from the remote past. Because there was

in México-Tenochitlán a great Nahuatl civilization and culture with deep philosophic-religious and scientific roots, . . ."

[25]Edward Tafoya, "You can't drive to Aztlán," El Cuaderno de vez en cuando, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 15.

[26]Ricardo Sanchez, "We were lost . . .," Canto y grito mi liberación (Garden City, N.Y., 1973), p. 41.

[27]Suárez, "El Hoyo," p. 156.

[28]Ricardo Sanchez, "Soledad," Canto y grito, p. 27.

HISPANIC WEDDING CUSTOMS IN NEW MEXICO--
YESTERDAY AND TODAY

by

Rosa Fernández Mines
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico

The wealth of folklore found in New Mexico has fascinated many visitors to the state. The religious ceremonies of the Penitentes, for example, have often been a source of great bewilderment to outsiders, as well as the subject of serious research done by several scholars. Similarly, Native-American tribal ceremonies enjoy widespread fame and are a frequent topic of newspaper and magazine articles. The performances of old miracle plays still enacted today in various parts of New Mexico also draw large crowds of visitors and natives alike every year.

There are many forms of folklore in New Mexico. Although some remain unknown because they are part of private social events, the public may enjoy others that are the core of lay and religious celebrations staged throughout the state during the year. A folkloric journey through New Mexico could begin in the north with the celebration of los Manueles in Taos on the 1st of January, and move through the many towns that honor their patron saints on their days--San José, San Ysidro, San Juan, San Miguel. The feast of the Lady of Guadalupe and the presentation of the shepherd play, Los Pastores, may be witnessed in the south in December. Additionally, there would also be fiestas on the anniversaries of historical events, such as Mexican Independence, the Reconquest of Santa Fe by De Vargas with the traditional burning of zozobra or "old man gloom," and the entrance of Don Juan de Oñate into the northern valleys commemorated in Española in July. In fact, such a journey could hardly be completed in one year since many celebrations are held simultaneously in several towns requiring different routes, each requiring subsequent trips to witness all of them.

Long periods of geographical and cultural isolation combined with a very strong sense of unity, resulting from common linguistic,

religious, and historical backgrounds, are factors which undoubtedly account for preservation of traditions among the Spanish-speaking people of New Mexico. Close-knit village relationships that exist developed partly from the need for protection from nomadic Indians, but probably for the more important and expeditious purpose of the retention of the communal land grant, which was contingent upon a well-organized, cooperative system. Communities were gregarious, and their social pleasures centered around religious feasts and family celebrations. Colonists brought customs to New Mexico which were faithfully adhered to, but truly New Mexican Hispanic[1] folklore resulted only with the addition of local color.

Weddings in a New Mexican community appear to have been gay and festive occasions in which everyone participated, not only for the sake of enjoyment, but also as a sign of community approval in addition to that which the church bestowed. This was not always the case. The opposite contention about church and community attitudes toward marriage appears in Agustín Yáñez's book, Al Filo del Agua. Set in a small town in central Mexico near the outbreak of the Revolution of 1910, the villagers reluctantly accepted marriage, believing that virginity should be preserved at all costs, and the church disapprovingly discouraged all festivities. Although the novel is fiction, its setting is not. The church decrees that marriage ceremonies be held as early in the morning as possible:

> Los matrimonios son en las primeras misas. A oscuras. O cuando raya la claridad, todavía indecisa. Como si hubiera un cierto género de vergüenza. Misterioso.[2]

In his book, Yáñez exposes the narrow-mindedness of people from

small towns in that section of the country where he was born which has, not surprisingly, been traditionally known for its extreme conservatism. Interestingly enough, it was from that same area that Juan de Oñate and other New Mexico colonists came.[3] It comes as no surprise, then, to find in the book descriptions of the flagellation practices in which the villagers engaged during lent, reminiscent of the ceremonies which Penitentes performed in New Mexico. However, all similarities appear to end there, and no other traditions seem to link New Mexico to that particular part of Mexico which Yáñez described.

Yet in the same time period New Mexicans demonstrate the more joyous, tolerant view. An account of a wedding reception in Socorro, as it appeared in the weekly newspaper, El Nuevo Mexicano published in Sante Fe, yields an indication of just how festive weddings could be in New Mexico in 1900:

> Había más de 300 regalos . . . Dos bandas de música tocaron . . . Lo siguiente dará idea de las viandas y licores que se consumieron en la fiesta: mil galones de ponche romano; 100 galones de sorbetas, 100 galones de limonada, 500 botellas de cerveza, 500 libras de biscochos, 500 docenas de biscochitos de diferentes clases, y en adición a esto carnes, frutas, nueces, dulces, pasteles.[4]

It was the wedding of Lorenzo P. García and Encarnación Abeyta.

One becomes aware of the importance attached to marriages in the Spanish-speaking communities of New Mexico only after noting the enormity of the celebrations scheduled for the wedding day and the numerous and elaborate preparations that preceeded the event, beginning with the petición de mano--a letter which the groom's parents are expected to write and personally deliver. The following letter from the book, Old

Spain in Our Southwest by Nina Otero, provides a good example of the traditional message sent on these occasions:

Most distinguished Señor:

Most esteemed Doña:

With our fitting regard and deserved affection, this informal note comes with the sole object of making your illustrious selves aware that our son, Felipe, is favorably disposed to your pleasing daughter, Consuelo. He wishes to place himself under your orders and to undergo the formality of the matrimonial ceremony in order to better serve you.

We await, señores, your answer in the hope that you will pledge to us the most precious jewel of your house. This is our prayer. We abide by your final decision when it is your pleasure to answer us.

We are, with highest respects,

At your orders,

Yours with all courtesy.[5]

Although there are conflicting recollections as to the length of time that elapsed before a reply was sent, a reasonable assumption would be that if the answer were to be favorable, the bride's father would not rush with a reply for fear of appearing too eager to rid himself of a daughter. In the event of a negative answer, however, the following morning was quite appropriate, according to some informants, lest the suitor begin to build false hopes. And so the day after, calabazas appeared outside his doorstep as a sign of refusal, a tradition which, although lost in practice today, remains in the form of the saying "dar calabazas" applied to a disappointment due to any kind of refusal.

An affirmative reply was followed by formal visits by both sets of parents to each other, and the date was possibly set then for the

prendorio, or engagement party, to be held at the home of the girl's parents. At the prendorio the introduction of the girl to the relatives of the groom was formally made by his father who, as custom had it, asked when all the guests had arrived: "Deseamos conocer a la prenda que pretendemos." The bride-to-be appeared at that moment led by her father who presented her saying: "Aquí tiene a la prenda que usted busca"; she, in turn, introduced the groom to her side of the family. The donas, or wedding presents, for the bride were later offered by the groom in a carved wooden chest that also contained the wedding dress. She received in addition an engagement ring of a type called Memoria with either two interlocked hearts or clusters of grapes and leaves, or perhaps flowers. The couple was then formally engaged, or prendados.

It is difficult to determine when the prendorio took place in relation to either the petición de mano or the wedding day itself. While some sources place it at two or three days before the wedding, others recall a lapse of several weeks. There is also evidence of a year's trial period during which the prospective groom had to prove his worth by accompanying or representing his future father-in-law during the yearly conducta, or caravan, to Chihuahua and Sonora to sell or trade goods:

> It was the custom among the gente de razon for an affianced youth to make one of these expeditions for his prospective father-in-law and he was expected to bring back an Indian slave girl as a present for his beloved.[6]

But perhaps Fergusson's use of the word "affianced" in the above quotation from Rio Grande is not meant to be taken literally to imply that the prendorio had already taken place before the young man went

away in the conducta.

Charles Lummis, in The Land of Poco Tiempo, contends that in addition to the conducta there were other chores, such as bison hunting and expeditions to the salt lakes of Zuñi for the year's supply of salt, and that it was not until the young man's return that his proposal of marriage was even considered:

> Having been thus ardously and dangerously employed for a year without material reward, the lover might receive the girl, or he might get the squashes.[7]

Today the few prendorios that are still celebrated are set at a date that is most convenient to the parties involved. The petición de mano is no longer done in writing, and whatever gesture of courtesy is made towards the girl's parents in asking for her hand is mostly a formality that often comes after the girl has received an engagement ring. Consequently, no calabazas or even negative replies are heard of now.

The wedding day contained its own special procedures, commencing with the wedding parade. Mesonero Romanos, in his Escenas Matritenses, writing of life in Madrid in the 1800's, describes what takes place on the wedding day after the religious ceremony when the couple ride in a hired coach, or coche simón, parading down the streets greeting everyone in what he calls pasear la boda.[8] In New Mexico today, pasear la boda is done in cars gaily decorated with paper flowers and streamers made by the bride and her bridesmaids the night before. The paseo goes through the center of town honking as they drive, alerting everyone to the fact that a wedding has just taken place. Before the introduction of the automobile to New Mexico, the members of the wedding party

walked from the church to the bride's home, preceded by a fiddler and other musicians.

Today, if the musicians do not actually march along with the bride and the groom anymore, they still honor the wedded couple by announcing their entrance in the reception hall with the playing of la marcha. The marcha opens the festivities because, prior to that moment, no music has been played nor any food served. The bridal party then marches around the room in couples followed by the close relatives of the newlyweds and any guests who wish to join in, forming certain traditional patterns as they move along.

A couple, one of several found in every community who are well versed in the art of following a set sequence of patterns while marching, is selected to lead the march. They must be experienced in having led it for years at weddings, anniversary dances, and bailes de coronación de reina. They charge no fee for leading a marcha because it is their contribution and part of the collective responsibility assumed by all of seeing that the festivities are as successful as possible.

There are probably as many variations to the marcha as there are leaders, several of whom feel that there is a definite symbolism to the figures made on the dance floor as the participants march. Mr. Pete Maese from Las Cruces, who has been leading marchas with his wife for over forty years, speaks of a heart-shaped figure that represents the love in the newlyweds' marriage, and of another one called cuples, during which the participants march four abreast instead of the usual two, symbolic of the support given to the couple by the community. Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Apodaca from Hatch make a zigzagging snake-like figure

at one point during their marcha that moves across the dance floor diagonally, representing the uneven path that a married couple must follow since life will not always run smoothly. Other leaders see no meaning attached to the patterns that they lead and claim to do them strictly for the visual effect. The last figure in the marcha is usually a circle formed by all the marchers with the bride and groom in the center. The song, La Marcha de Zacatecas, which has been playing all along, ends at this point, and the band now strikes a waltz or the couple's favorite song to which they dance by themselves for a while; gradually the rest of the couples forming the circle join them.

Unquestionably, the wedding dance is the high point of the social functions surrounding a marriage celebration. It is at the dance that the cake is cut, when most of the presents are brought, and the best attended of the functions. It is also during the dance that additional money contributions are collected from the guests. One way to start a collection is for the groomsmen to "kidnap" the bride, thus forcing the groom to gather the ransom money required to bring her back. Another more popular method is to have the band leader announce that the following song will be the danza del dinero or baile del dólar for which all guests willing to participate line up, money in hand, ready to "pay" for a chance to dance with the bride or the groom. One of the attendants collects the bills and pins them on the groom's jacket or the bride's veil.

A tradition peculiar to the northern part of the state is la entrega or entrega de novios, which usually brings the wedding day's festivities to an end. The entrega de novios is, according to New Mexican folklorist Juan Rael, "perhaps the most genuinely New Mexican of all

the ceremonies that take place during the typical New Mexican Spanish wedding."[9] It is, unfortunately, disappearing very rapidly.

As with the marcha, the entrega also requires the expert knowledge of someone in the community who is willing to help carry out another part of the wedding festivities, this time of a more serious nature. The poeta, or singer, usually accompanies himself with a guitar if the ceremony takes place at the home of the bride's parents, or with the band if it is held at the reception hall. He sings a series of coplas, or stanzas, varying in number from about eighteen to fifty-two, depending on the version sung, which are generally quatrains of eight syllable lines with assonance in the second and fourth lines. The verses are addressed primarily to the couple, although there are stanzas directed to the audience, to the parents of the bride and groom, and to the padrinos. The verses stress the indissolubility of marriage, the responsibilities of married life, the severing of the tie of parental dependency. The singer also instructs the couple at one point (at the end of some versions, in the middle of others) to kneel and be blessed by their parents and by the padrinos.

The variations of the entrega are numerous and so are the musical versions, but all are concerned with the same purpose of conveying a moral lesson to the newlyweds. The presence of so many variations seems to support the local origination of the entrega, particularly in view of the fact that some stanzas make specific references to New Mexican villages by name. One widely used version of the entrega includes the following stanza:

Todo este río pa bajo
corre el agua cristalina

donde se lavan las manos
el padrino y la madrina.

Another version replaces it with this stanza:

De este riito pa bajo
crece mucha jara verde
las muchachas de Velarde
la que no pellizca, muerde.[10]

In 1940, Juan Rael came to the conclusion that no trace of the existence of the entrega could be found elsewhere. This observer's research supports Rael's theory.

While looking for the origin of some of the folkloric elements found in Hispanic weddings in New Mexico, the present as well as the future should also be considered in terms of those traditions that are lost or rapidly disappearing. What, for instance, are the factors that determine why some traditions remain, like the marcha, and others are lost, like the prendorio? Or, to what extent does the loss of a tradition change the attitudes of the people toward the particular function for which this custom was once used? These and similar questions need to be answered while we search through the past.

FOOTNOTES

[1]I have used the term Hispanic throughout this paper to mean pertaining or related to the Spanish language or to other cultural characteristics of those persons who trace their origin to Spanish speaking countries, particularly Spain and Mexico.

[2]Augustín Yáñez, Al Filo del Agua (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1963), p. 6.

[3]George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, "Oñate and the Colonization of New Mexico," in New Mexico Past and Present, ed. Richard N. Ellis (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), p. 21.

[4]El Nuevo Mexicano, 16 June 1900, p. 3., col. 2.

[5]Nina Otero, Old Spain in Our Southwest (New York: Hartcourt, Brace and Co., 1936), p. 40.

[6]Harvey Fergusson, Rio Grande (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), p. 86.

[7]Charles Lummis, The Land of Poco Tiempo (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 21.

[8]Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, Escenas Matritenses (Madrid: M. Aguilar, ed., 1945), p. 259.

[9]Juan Rael, "New Mexican Wedding Songs," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 4 (1940), pp. 55-72.

[10]Both of these versions were supplied by John R. Gutiérrez, Velarde, New Mexico.

THE PARADOXES OF CONTEMPORARY PUERTO RICAN POETRY

by

Rodolfo Cortina Gómez

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The fundamental problem confronting a student of contemporary Puerto Rican poetry is the basic one of defining it clearly. Traditionally, the term contemporary embraced the period since World War II, particularly in Western society, largely due to the primal importance occupied by the War in the historical consciousness of Western man. The definition of contemporary in Puerto Rico, however, is marked by a different historical event: the passage in the Congress of the United States of America of Public Law 600 in 1950. This document established the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and, in so doing, created the unavoidable problem of identity for the Puerto Rican of the island held by the United States. This dichotomy has preoccupied Puerto Rican poets, who must react to their roots in light of a status not unlike Spanish Jews after 1492.

It appears fairly obvious that the poet's endeavor takes place largely in cities, whether these be on the island or the mainland. The economic conditions of the island have forced a migration of the deprived to continental cities, which constitute a network of boricua settlements throughout the United States. The population originally concentrated in New York City, creating a two-island Pan Puerto Rican bond consisting of Manhattan and Puerto Rico. This bond has since broadened, changing the locus of "Puerto Rico" to both locations. The island itself stands at its spiritual center as the matrix, despite its distance, of all Puerto Ricans. Hence, it could be argued that the locus of Puerto Rico is fragmented and that its internal unity is questionable, whereas its external political, economic, and linguistic parameters are obviously definitive.

These conditions create three sets of implications for contemporary

Puerto Rican poetry. The first set is political in nature and concerns the thematic content of the poetry. There is no doubt that the forces which determine the Puerto Rican state of being also create an atmosphere of oppression for the native Puerto Rican. This is especially true for the poet who, by virtue of his calling, must know who he is and whose primary task is to not lose sight of his identity so that he may continue his labor. The colonial pressures of politics, economics, and linguistics, that is, the total and complete domination of the United States mainland over the island, constantly poses a threat to the poet: he is always cognizant that the power operates to fragment his inner unity, to destroy his language, and to attempt to force him to yield to the "superior" civilization. Consequently, the poetry contains a basic thematic emphasis of independence for the island. The Rican communities of the mainland are compelled to face the situation as well: their poets must sing the song of independence and freedom for the island, but they must also recognize their own immediate environment and predicament--cities populated with the poor, the untrained, the hopeless Rican, and the problems of the select few who appear to be rising on the socio-economic ladder. Paralleling the song of independence is the song of liberation of the people in the barrios of the mainland. The minor themes, of course, include the identity crisis of the alienated Rican, the suffering and the despair of the population, and their essential folklore.

Another implication created by this geographic dichotomy concerns the clash of mainland and island cultures at an economic level: the mainland's industrial culture is definitely "superior" to the island's. Simply put, life in San Juan is not as good, economically, as life in

the mainland cities. Hence the separation of city life in the island from that of the mainland demands that San Juan and other island cities fit into another, a different, category. Upon re-elaborating Horace's beatus ille, therefore, the poets sing the praises of Puerto Rico as the locus amoenus, the ideal pastoral setting which, naturally, includes the island's cities as well. Consequently, the Rican cities of the mainland become the ugly and ruthless setting for a picaresque existence in search of survival under the nose of the oppressor. It is possible, then, to identify the urban mainland experience with the Jungian concept of the masculine Logos, and the rural island experience with the equally Jungian concept of the feminine Eros, depicted sometimes as a lover, sometimes as a mother.[1] The theme of the American occupation and colonization of Puerto Rico becomes a rape scene to be resisted and denounced. The pastoral ideal assumes thereby political implications hitherto unknown. And the concomitant myth that usually accompanies the beatus ille, the myth of the golden age, or the "good ole days," becomes converted into a dream of a future golden age. The independent paradise which is yet to come seems dependent upon a marxist vision of a future liberation. This is perhaps due to the inevitable apocalypse inherent in Marx's interpretation: the conviction that capitalism is doomed and that the revolution must come. Hence, the political themes of independence and liberation are amplified and projected into the future creating an expectation of transforming the pastoral ideal into a marxist utopia.

The linguistic set of implications focuses on the problem of language as a vehicle of communication for the poet and his audience. Before 1898 the only language system of the island and its inhabitants

was Spanish. Puerto Ricans used Spanish to communicate orally, to keep their written records, and ultimately to forge an identity of their own. Since 1898 English has penetrated the former domain of Spanish. It has imposed itself on the island's records and, therefore, affected its cultural identity. It affects the island's schools and literature and, therefore, the people's minds. Spanish thus becomes a residual, an oral assertion of identity which is used in the speech and literary dreams of the people.

It would be extremely simplistic to see this as a model in which the conscious mind functions in English and the subconscious mind in Spanish. That might be true of a "transindividual model," but not of the man of flesh and bones. It is useful, however, to note the attractiveness of the model here, for it demonstrates how far the colonization process has proceeded and allows us to make at least one important contention: that for the Ricans of the mainland, Spanish has become a sentimental language and English a utilitarian tool. If we are to accept the view that language selection clearly affects how one analyzes problems, one's perspectives, then we must also believe that the limitations of the language imposed will predetermine certain types of solutions to problems under investigation.

Curiously, then, Spanish becomes the language of Eros which embodies the oral tradition (coplas, décimas, plenas, romances, etc.) and is associated with the pastoral ideal, whereas English, the analytic Logos incarnate, appears as the language of the picaresque battle for bread and of the revolution of the future. But the language problem is somewhat more complex. In some cases a linguistic switch takes place which contradicts, in a sense, the distinctions that we have so

neatly made so far in that every element is transposed to a new context. For example, Victor Hernández Cruz, in "Back to/Back to," identifies the pastoral ideal in terms of the black experience which can be summarized as a rural southern black/urban northern black who dreams of returning to the south. Hernandez Cruz alludes to a popular song in two English verses ("i never go back to georgia/i never go back to georgia")[2] and opposes this ideal desire to return to his native land, as Cesaire himself would say, to the ugly reality of the big city where dope addicts and pushers ("man what strange shit you taking/back/man what strange shits you pushing") populate the familiar Rican neighborhood ("by the candy store la vieja/la vieja/la vieja is still alive &/ cuchifritos & rice & beans by/la bodega de pepe by the corner/anti-poverty housing toms/by chelas & the kids yelling & pushing/people down"), switching in codes, but also employing the appropriate variations: black English (dope), Puerto Rican Spanish (neighborhood). As it should be apparent by now, the linguistic problem is extremely complex. If the effective societal diglossia demands that linguistic activity occur along certain prescribed lines, the largely deficient individual bilingualism belies such prescriptions without question. Thus, the language associations herein suggested may be mutually acceptable in many cases, but they may also become dysfunctional at some level or in some sector of the Rican system. The language of the Puerto Rican poet is still in an evolutionary state.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Cf. Luis Antonio Rosario Quiles, ed., Poesía nueva puertorriqueña (Río Piedras, 1971), pp. 205-6.

[2]Alfredo Matilla and Iván Silén, eds., The Puerto Rican Poets/Los poetas puertorriqueños (New York, 1972), pp. 208-11. All citations are from this edition of Victor Hernández Cruz's poem.

LITERATURE OF THE BARRIO

by

Maria E. Torres

Wayne State University

Detroit, Michigan

The intent of this paper is to study the ways in which Puerto Rican poets, particularly Victor Hernandez Cruz, Felipe Luciano, and Pedro Pietri weigh and present attitudes, philosophies, and values on the total human and political situation of Puerto Ricans on the mainland.

For people involved in the process of education, whatever field it may be, this topic is of vast importance because the philosophical attitudes in the literature utilized in the classroom have influence and are frequently incorporated into the minds of people and become part of their life style. This topic is also important because readers of the literature are students and critics of the texts, and we, as educators, must be aware and concerned with the perspective on humanity which this literature portrays and perpetuates. Thus, this writer will attempt to address the point of reference, the interpretation, and the effects of the literature which will give us an understanding of the poets' attitudes toward the masses and the concept of class.

The author's life experiences, understandings, and study of this society create certain assumptions and conclusions about its nature. The multi-national character of this country, the university and students in a city like Detroit, which is presently going through a severe economic and political crisis, has necessitated an objective and scientific understanding of phenomena which daily surround us. Inevitably, the students with whom the author works discuss such topics as class analysis and attitudes towards the masses. Thus, "Literature of the Barrio" has more meaning and relevance at this time.

Puerto Rican poetry in the United States is born out of, and reflects, the oppression and exploitation of the Puerto Rican in this

country. The point of departure for many of the Puerto Rican poets in the United States is the rejection of these conditions. Alfredo Matilla correctly points this out in the following citation:

> De esa confusión de mundos nace el poeta nuestro de Nueva York, traumatizado por la lengua del opresor, consciente de su ser radicalmente distinto a la circunstancia que lo rodea, movido por el imperativo de plasmar una visión de la realidad que deje constancia del rechazo implícito de ese otro universo, el cual--sin embargo--es asimismo su punto poético de referencia más inmediato.[1]

It is such things as the exploitation of living in the ghettos--dirty streets, hunger, drugs, bad housing--and the inability to speak the oppressor's language that Puerto Rican poets draw from and at the same time reject.

However, in the distinction between the poets of the island and the poets of New York, Matilla confuses the conditions which gave rise to the poetry in both places when he states that the poet from New York has a proletarian base, whereas the poet from the island reflects middle class values. He says:

> Quizás la diferencia más notable entre los poetas criados en Nueva York y los de la Isla, es que los primeros parten de una base proletaria, y los segundos desde los estamentos medios.[2]

Let us focus on and analyze the poetry of three well-known Puerto Rican poets--Victor Hernandez Cruz, Felipe Luciano, and Pedro Pietri. The study shows that proletarian poetry is not a mere rejection of the oppression faced by the masses of Puerto Rican people, but that it depends heavily on the attitude of the poet towards the people and the issue of class, as well as how the poets present the issues at hand.

The premise here is that all poetry reflects a political and class orientation:

> In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that is detached from or independent from politics.[3]

Art and politics are intimately bound to each other; one serves the other; they draw from each other; and both serve a definite group in this society. In other words, one can talk about poetry serving the masses as well as poetry serving and perpetuating the rulers of this country. In a creative form, the poet crystallizes the relationship of man to nature and the relationships of man to man. The experiences from which a poet draws are based on objective reality. Therefore, it is very important that the poet understand society, its laws of development, and the times in which he lives. The attitude the poet has towards the masses of people, their life styles, and their values is very important to understand if we are to analyze the poetic expression from a revolutionary viewpoint.

Revolutionary poetry is one that serves the people, a powerful weapon that helps unite and educate the masses to fight its enemy in a unison of heart and in a single-minded fashion. It is a poetry that learns from the people and, in return, gives to the people.

You might ask yourself: how are we to determine whether a poet has created such poetry? From a revolutionary viewpoint, one would consider two criteria: the artistic and the political. Politically, that which promotes unity, which opposes retrogression, and promotes progress, is good. That which foments dissension and discord among the masses and

opposes progress and drags people back is bad. The motive of serving the masses is inseparably linked with the effect of winning their approval. Thus, the poet or artist should not be judged just by his declarations, but by the effects of his art form on the masses in society. Artistically, one must look at the quality of the work, the richness and mastering of the language, the innovation and its richness in context. For one to speak of revolutionary poetry, one must look at the unity of politics and art, because a work of art which lacks artistic quality has no force, regardless of however progressive the poetry is politically.

In conclusion, revolutionary poetry is that which, in an artistic form, reflects the close linkage of the artist with the masses, which gives expression to the masses' thoughts and feelings, and which serves them as a loyal spokesman. At the same time, it educates the masses about the essence of their situation and their ability to change these conditions.

In an attempt to examine these three poets, the author has chosen one work of each poet that speaks to the situation of the masses and will attempt to demonstrate, through its analysis, the class viewpoint and attitude towards the masses of the people.

In "Their Poem," Cruz gives a description of the experiences of the masses in the New York ghettos. He stresses the desires of many people. For example, some want to get married, others want luxury, to be "in," to dress in style, or to be an intellectual.

As he describes their condition, Cruz portrays an attitude of disgust and contempt for their desires. His approach is not merely one of understanding the circumstances of those desires; in fact, he goes

beyond this to say that they are the ones who do not understand his discontent. "She [Carmen] thinks i'm a little crazy"[4] because she did not understand why he would not wear knits like everybody else. Helen, the Jewish neighbor, does not understand why he got off dope without her because, since they had met, they had done everything together. Candy, his girlfriend, did not understand why he should hit her, so she left him. All these characters, which represent the people, are portrayed as having very little capacity of understanding their surroundings. The only character that had some sense was "Little Man."

> Little Man would understand even now when i see him
> he wonders
> why i still carry a knife
> them days are over, he tells me & i stare at him
> & he understands[5]

The question this writer would pose is whether the author understands the masses, their feelings, their ways of life, and their needs. Apparently he does not. He did not understand why they have such desires or why they think the way they do. He is neither patient nor objective in his appraisal of their ways. His attitude shows his "middle class values" of seeing himself and very few others of superior quality, superior to the "mobs." The final stanza shows this very clearly:

> &
> all these years how old i must be getting
> but no
> i turn to the mirror & stare at my youth
> & wonder at my intelligence.[6]

In "Message to a dope fiend . . . " Felipe Luciano describes a drug addict's experience of being hooked. The attitude that Luciano portrays is one of antagonism towards the drug addict. When a revolutionary poet tries to deal with contradictions among the masses, he should be patient and educative. He would understand that the majority of the people have not been given many options in life, but if they understood their ability to change these conditions, their circumstances might well be different. In other words, the contradictions among the masses are not antagonistic in nature and can be resolved.

In his attempt to be revolutionary, much of what is poetic is drowned and is not given its proper importance. He interjects into the poetry some revolutionary phrases, such as:

> You ain't got nothing to lose
> but your freedom[7]

These phrases do not enhance the poetry, not because of the phrases "per se," but because he was not able to incorporate it creatively and as an integral part of the experience of a dope "fiend." In his desire to talk about revolution in his last stanza, he writes:

> When the revolution comes
> very, very soon-You shoot, and I'll shoot
> You shoot and I'll shoot, you shoot I'll shoot-
> And unless you shoot straight,
> I'm gonna get you
> before you get yourself![8]

He introduces revolution and social change as afterthoughts. The poem does not lead up to this last stanza, nor is it educating the masses as to how the drug scene is directly connected with the oppression they

face under a capitalist system. It also shows very clearly the middle class values of the author in that he portrays himself as a "revolutionary," as a savior of humanity's maladies, instead of showing how and why the drug scene affects the lives of the masses and their own ability to change the oppressive conditions they face.

In the poem "Puerto Rican Obituary," Pedro Pietri describes the sense of responsibility which the masses have:

They worked
They were always on time
They were never late[9]

He continues with a description of the submissive attitudes which the masses many times take:

They never spoke back
When they were insulted
They worked
They never went on strike
Without permission[10]

Pietri also describes the working conditions they face:

They never took days off
That were on the calendar
They worked
Ten days a week
And were only paid for five[11]

He goes on to describe their tragic life, always dreaming and wishing that someday they will be able to get out of the rut--poverty, filth, and fighting--that their lives represent. He describes the hundreds of Puerto Ricans who have lost all sense of national identity:

Dead Puerto Rican
Who never knew they were Puerto Ricans[12]

It is a loss, not because they have freely chosen to do so, but because the domination of their economic, cultural, and political life by the United States has forced them into conditions "where mice live like millionaires and the people do not live at all."[13] Their life is not one of fulfillment, and they will die waiting for that day when they can see clean streets and live a decent life. But in those dreams, as Pietri correctly points out, the distortion of what a good life means is that of being an ideal American family, of having a nice home to get away from the Puerto Rican neighborhoods and of living with white people:

Dreaming about Queens
Clean cut lily white
    neighborhood
Puerto Ricanless scene
Thirty thousand dollar home
The first spics on the block
Proud to belong in to a
    community
Of gringos who want them
    lynched
Proud to be a long distance
    away
From the sacred phrase:
    ¿Que Pasa?[14]

Pietri correctly emphasizes that these ideas do not drop from the sky

nor are they inherent. He does this by dramatizing the role which the media has played in perpetuating such ideals as passivity. To dramatize this he says, "They were trained to turn/The other cheek/by newspapers . . . ."[15]

Pietri also describes the contradictions that occur among the people because of the kind of competitive and individualistic society we live in.

Juan
Died hating Miguel because
Miguel's
Used car was in better
condition
Than his used car
Miguel
Died hating Milagros because
Milagros
Had a color television set
And he could not afford one
yet
Milagros
Died hating Olga because
Olga
Made five dollars more on the
same job[16]

Pietrie also states that these ideas and conditions are changeable.

If only they
Had turned off the television

> And turned into their own
> imaginations
> If only they
> Had used the white
> supremacy bibles
> For toilet paper purpose[17]

However, Pietri, unlike Luciano, never demonstrates antagonism towards the masses, nor does he ever show contempt. He understands the conditions that surround and give rise to these desires, and he uses a pedagogical approach in the faith that someday these conditions and desires can be resolved. He shows love and warmth towards the masses and describes them as "beautiful people" without falling into a paternalistic attitude of protection.

Apart from some obvious errors in definition of terms, such as the classification of Puerto Ricans as a race, which is a matter of scientific understanding, this writer, with no doubt, has to admit that Pedro Pietri's "Puerto Rican Obituary" is one that reflects the conditions, desires, life style, and needs of the masses of Puerto Ricans in the United States. This is not to acclaim Pedro Pietri as the Barrio revolutionary poet in his totality, because this writer has not engaged in sufficient study of this poet.

The examination of Hernandez Cruz, Luciano, and Pietri was limited, but the differences between the three poems are clear. These differences are confirmed when one observes the relationship between the artist and the masses. This relationship is very important when determining the class attitude of the artist because it is not enough to reject the oppressive conditions; nor is it sufficient to raise a

slogan without any meaning. It is necessary to show concretely the people's condition, their reason for being, their needs and aspirations. Art and literature are not separate from our political reality. Thus, art and literature should be examined in proper perspective.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Alfredo Matilla, "Poesia Puertorriqueña en Nueva York" [The Broken English Dream], Revista del Instituto de Estudios Puertorriqueños. Vol. 1, No. 1, Primavera, 1971, p. 61.

[2]Ibid., p. 64.

[3]Mao Tse Tung, "Yenan Forum on Literature and Art," Selected Readings, Peking 1971, p. 271.

[4]Victor Hernandez Cruz, "Their Poem," Snaps (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 54.

[5]Ibid., p. 55.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Felipe Luciano, "Message to a dope fiend . . . ," quoted in The Puerto Rican Poets (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 202.

[8]Ibid., p. 204.

[9]Pedro Pietri, "Puerto Rican Obituary," quoted in Borinquen: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Literature (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 453.

[10]Ibid., p. 453.

[11]Ibid., pp. 453-54.

[12]Ibid., p. 455.

[13]Ibid., pp. 455-56.

[14]Ibid., p. 457.

[15]Ibid., p. 459.

[16]Ibid., pp. 462-63.

[17]Ibid., p. 464.

THE CHILD'S WAKE: A PUERTO RICAN FOLK TRADITION, IN ABELARDO DÍAZ ALFARO'S "EL BAQUINÉ"

by

Lucy Torres
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

The old European custom of the wake ceremony was known in Spain as the velatorio, a term derived from velas, or candles, which burnt through the night that the deceased remained in the house of his relatives. This custom, now known as velorio, has been practiced in Latin America since the early times of the Spanish rule. Friends and neighbors are always invited to the velorio to join the relatives of the deceased from the early hours of the evening until dawn. If the velorio is for an adult, the ceremony is then more solemn, accompanied by prayers of the rosary, sometimes with long litanies recited by lay persons. With the prayers, the living assist the soul of the dead in its rapid release from purgatory and ascent into heaven. If the wake is for a child, then there is no need for many prayers because an innocent child has not been able to harm or commit any transgressions against anyone; thus, his soul is free to make its journey straight to heaven. He is now an angelito, a little angel who shall protect his parents and relatives, as well as neighbors and friends, from heaven as if he were a guardian angel.

In addition to praying, the participants of the velorio play games, tell riddles, sing songs, and narrate or dramatize stories. These "pagan" elements of the wake ceremony serve to keep the participants awake through the hours of the night. While the wake ceremony for a deceased adult maintains a certain devotional solemnity, the wake for a child invariably seems to be a joyous event.

In Puerto Rico, the child's wake is known as the florón[1] (a term of hispanic origin) if it is for a white child, and baquiné[2] if it is for a black child. The Puerto Rican folklorist, María Cadilla de Martínez, observed several kinds of velorios on the island, among which the most

commonly known are the baquinís or baquinés. These serve to observe the anniversary of the death of a relative or a friend, to fulfill a promise made to a Catholic saint, and to commemorate the death of a child.[3]

When trying to explain the origin of the term baquiné or baquiní, Dr. Álvarez Nazario says that the Puerto Rican ceremony, as well as the word that describes it, show a similarity to certain kinds of funeral cults of evident African influence practiced by the Jamaican peasants. These peasants believe that the spirit of the deceased comes back during the nine nights after his death to visit relatives and friends and wanders round about his old surroundings. For this reason they celebrate his return during those nights, on the last of which they celebrate a special ceremony to please the spirit whom they try to persuade to return to where it belongs. In the Jamaican mountains of Santa Cruz on that ninth night, the black men make a big fire around which they play games while observed by girls and women. The name of this joyous ceremony is bakinny, derived from the Jamaican "back in i" which, according to Martha Beckwith, is derived from the English "back in it"[4] and expresses the desire that the spirit return to its resting place. This theory seems plausible when the Jamaican influence on Puerto Rico could be a result of the many slaves who were introduced to the Spanish Antilles who came from Jamaica, which was the main center for the slave trade, during the centuries of colonization.[5] The Jamaican term, with its few variations in Puerto Rico, could also have been brought to the neighboring islands directly by Africans. This theory also seems reasonable because the funeral rituals have some similarity with the rituals of the Ashanti, the Ewe, and the Yoruba

tribes in the neighborhood of the Gulf of Guinea or the Coast of the Slaves, of whom many Afro-Antilleans are descendants. In the Yoruba language, the term kini-kini (equivalent to "I greet, greeting"), still used in the Afro-Cuban dialect Anagó, could possibly have given origin to the Jamaican and Puerto Rican terms. The Yoruba kini-kini is related to the root word kini of the Bei language spoken in Liberia and Sierra Leone, a term which expresses emotion, sadness, or something moving or sorrowful; from this was derived bakinikini which means, "I greet, greeting respectfully the Orishas or saints."[6]

In La Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico Dr. Díaz Soler talks about the velorio in the early centuries of colonization in Puerto Rico as a joyous event for the slaves whenever one of them, child or adult, died. The historian explains that in the nineteenth century the celebration of the velorio was forbidden by law because the Spaniards considered it shameful in the face of the practice of other Spanish traditions on the island. First the Catholic Church, with its strong dogmas which were imposed upon the slaves, and then the legal restrictions contributed to the deterioration of the "primitive" African rites and cults of the black population of the island. However, the presence of some "primitive" elements can still be observed mingled with the Christian religion in traditional events such as the velorios.[7]

The following is a description of a typical baquiné in Puerto Rico: the angelito, or dead child, already in his wooden or cardboard coffin which has been decorated with colorful paper, is placed on a table covered with clean white sheets. If the dead child is a girl, she will have make-up on her face, but otherwise a girl or a boy will look alike--flowers from head to feet, a red or white carnation between

the lips, and sometimes a diadem of white flowers on the head. The idea that the little dead child is an angel is not only Spanish or Spanish-American, for the Italians also called little children angels.[8] The innocence of the angelito is conveyed with a red or white carnation, or even an everlasting flower put between the lips.[9] The friends and neighbors invited to the baquiné usually bring a variety of flowers to decorate the room where the child is kept, which gives a colorful aspect to the place. The baquineros, men who are always ready for the occasion, spread the news of the baquiné celebration in the neighborhood. The baquiné starts from the early evening hours and lasts until daybreak. While the food and drinks vary according to the budget of the child's parents, they usually serve at least chocolate, coffee, crackers, and usually the strong mamplé, or rum.

The instruments that accompany the music of the baquiné include guitars, cuatros, and drums, the most important of which are the percussion instruments that carry better the rhythms of the event's typical music. It is not surprising to see the participants following the rhythms with plates, spoons, and forks.[10] The riddles and games help to keep the festive atmosphere, for they are usually full of humor.[11] The stories are narrated or dramatized inside or outside of the house. The songs are not always sad mourning songs, but those which are sung in the hour before dawn are quite sad because they warn of the departure of the child from the house to the cemetery. An example of this type of mourning song is:

> Cojan a ese niño,
> llévenlo a enterrar,
> a ver si su madre

deja de llorar.
No lo llores madre,
no lo llores más.
que ese ángel tiene
las alas mojás.
Desde el cielo vienen
muchos angelitos
a buscar al niño
que está dormidito.[12]

The typical baquiné music includes Puerto Rican décimas, aguinaldos, coplas, and villancicos of the old Spanish tradition. To the old Spanish villancicos the Afro-Puerto Ricans adapted their own less complicated rhythms, which were in better harmony with their ancestral tunes.[13]

The strongest elements of Negroid influence on Puerto Rican culture are most evident in the south and southeastern part of the island. By 1900 Guayama, La Ciudad de los Brujos (city of the wizards), had a large black population. In Guayama the young poet Palés Matos was born and gained his first impressions about the Negro man, which later enriched the world of the cycle of his "black" poetry, that of Tuntún de Pasa y Grifería (1937). His nana, La Negra Lupe, who had served the Palés family for many years, used to sing songs of African origin to the young Luis Palés Matos, who evoked them later in his Afro-Antillean poetry. Once, La Negra Lupe took Palés to a baquiné in Guayama where he heard sounds he never forgot.

Palés Matos learned from La Negra Lupe the Canto en Cangá, which says: "Adombe gangá mondé . . .," but he also heard it in that baquiné

which he attended with her. It was sung there by a man whom the poet refers to as the Gran Cienpies,[14] a kind of soloist who was followed by the chorus repeating the line, which the poet uses later as the main refrain of his poem, "Falsa canción de baquiné."

In the poem, the dead child looks as if he were peacefully resting in his profound sleep which the African deity, Babilongo, protects. The spirit of the black child is now free to go and see the shore and the palm trees; and, before the great fire, he shall be able to dance with Tembandumba, la gran matriarca.[15] Now his zombie[16] can return to Guinea, the fatherland; and through the jungle the great god of Africa, Bombo, shall lead his innocent steps on a journey that no one can disturb: neither the white shadow on the grass nor the black sorcerer can pursue him. To protect him from witchcraft, an amulet, which consists of a tail of a scorpion, must be hung about his neck, and he must drink crocodile urine with snake's lard; and all this shall give him the good fortune to find an ardent woman and strengthen him as a warrior and a dancer. Papá Ogún, the god of the warriors,[17] shall then make him a great warrior. Thus, at the end of the baquiné, offerings must be addressed to this deity.[18]

The Guayamese poet was a self-educated man who had studied the different African peoples, the Haitian voodooists, and Afro-Cuban ñáñigos whom he then portrayed in his "black" poetry. This explains why the cycle of Tuntún de Pasa y Grifería is so saturated with various elements of the rites and cults of the black man of Africa and the Antilles. The Haitian cults of the voodoo ceremony, for instance, are mixed with the elements of the Puerto Rican baquiné ceremony in the poem, "Falsa canción de baquiné."

The Puerto Rican painter, Francisco Oller, a disciple of Courbet in France during the second half of the nineteenth century, occasionally interrupted his artistic activities to visit his beloved island. The problems of the Puerto Rican workers and peasants[19] inspired such works as "El Negro Flagelado," known also as "Un Boca Abajo en una Hacienda de Puerto Rico," and his most famous painting, "El Velorio," known as "El Baquiné."[20] "El Velorio" shows the wake of a child whose death was caused by the disease of misery common to all of those who endured poverty. Oller's painting reveals what he probably witnessed on his island during the latter years of the nineteenth century.[21]

The writer Abelardo Díaz Alfaro, in his short story "El Baquiné," portrays a realistic picture of what he observed during the decades preceding the 1950's in the village of Yaurel. He tells us that:

> There, in my memorable village of Yaurel, was where I began the hard struggles of my life and learned that which I could never learn in books: that was a school of hardship. I learned of malaria, anemia and the consumption of the bloated children's bodies who always looked with melancholy eyes, and of the lashes of hunger on sleepless faces.[22]

The child who has died and for whom the black men of the village of Yaurel celebrated the baquiné is a poor child, a victim of anemia, a disease so common among the infant population of the island during the first half of this century. Certainly this child, whose bloated body was now dead, is similar to that portrayed by Oller.

In the dramatization of the story of their own lives on the front yard or batey of the child's house, the black men of Yaurel, while standing in a circle, described the dead child by singing:

> "Mama, look at Melo; he looks cute, little Melo,

> little Melo is dead!"
>
> . . .
>
> "Melo, Melo, Melo!"[23]

The author then provides a more detailed description of the child:

> And Melo, in his small rustic wooden coffin, with eyes like beads, with a red carnation between his withered lips, with a heartsease flower tied around his neck, seems as if he were suspended from heaven. Now the child wanders through the fields where pain does not exist and hunger does not pierce. It is the mourning song for the sad departure of Melo, whose life, like a flower in bloom, was cut short by the "Grim Reaper."[24]

As noted earlier, to narrate or dramatize stories is part of the baquiné ceremony. Díaz Alfaro explores that aspect to portray the life of the black man of the village of Yaurel, in the area near the coast where there are sugar cane plantations:

> Behind the shadow of the sugar mill's dense smoke, a people whose skin the incandescent sun burns, still suffers, grieving its past of slavery. Its "olé" is a prolongued, plaintive chant, heard at noon while the sugar cane bagasse crackles under the red-hot sun on the zenith, and the oxen ruminate their tiredness of centuries under the cool shade of the mango trees. Both oxen and men are forced to struggle as if they were tamed to bear the same yoke. Bitter sugar cane fields are cut through by slimy irrigation ditches--mosquitoes' breeding pools. . . . On Sunday, the peasant, after hard laboring, gives rein to his transitory free will drinking to forget his life of hardship in the sugar cane plantation.[25]

The child's wake of Díaz Alfaro's story was celebrated on a

Sunday evening, an event the writer himself witnessed and described in order to analyze every scene of the dramatization which took place in the child's parents' front yard. The drama of these peasants' lives began with the persistent chanting, carrying with it the ancestral sorrow. They were singing, joined by the rhythm of a cua, or improvised drum, that an old man played. From the middle of the circle, the first one to start narrating the story in a dialogue with the chorus sang about the baquiña leaf (or monkey's hand leaf), a medicinal plant which they believed to have miraculous effects.[26] Later Comandé comes to tell of his life of misfortune. He represents the poor man who takes his relative to the town hospital where the doctor himself tells him that there is no bed; thus, the poor man's fate is to die without medical assistance. Next, a limping Cobé tells of his life--a man harrassed by the police, who escaped after killing another man in a quarrel and who has been protected by his friends.

Yet another narrator symbolizes the rebelliousness of the black man forced to work for a miserable salary. He complains, but all he gets is persecution by the master and the police when he neglects to do his labor. Finally the crab seller illustrates how his life consists of "casco na má," or shells only, for fishing crabs is too much trouble for so little food.

The end of this drama is a primitive scene which represents a collective tragedy: that of the hurricane of Saint Philip.[27] The performers build coconut palm branch huts that are then destroyed by the strong gusts of wind. All of the people, terrified, run away. At the conclusion of this scene, the author exclaims:

"Saint Philip, what an unforgettable scar you left on my people's

flesh!"[28]

The hurricane of Saint Philip was a terrible experience for the people of the island, especially the peasants:

> That morning was a tragic awakening for Puerto Rico! The wind swept away the crops, the river flooded the valley, drowning all the animals, and from under the palm or zinc roof, the good neighbor had to carry out his son covered with blood, then he had to wander without a home, forced to depend on the "shameful welfare."[29]

This drama, based on different aspects of the black man's life, reveals an historical period through which the Afro-Puerto Rican population had to endure the remnants of slavery. This is the drama of the poor of Puerto Rico.[30]

This human drama is the exposition and analysis of the superstition of the poor man who is refused a bed in the hospital and who believes that something like the baquiña leaf is a panacea for all his illnesses, of the poor man whose stomach is pierced by the "eleven thousand roads of hunger,"[31] of the fugitive of justice who does not want to be captured to spend the rest of his life in jail, of the rebelliousness of the black man lashed by the hardships of life in the sugar cane plantations and the scornful treatment of the overseers, of the man who works from dawn to dusk and sometimes drinks the mamplé or rum that puts fire in the blood and helps him to forget the sad memories or ancestral sorrows hidden in the innermost part of the heart. Such is the life of this man: "work and more work, pain and more pain," or worse, "shells only,"[32] which can be translated as poverty and more poverty.

Díaz Alfaro ends his narrative by describing the way in which the

typical baquiné usually concludes:

> . . . inside the house they mourned for the dead child. With two guitars they sang:
>
> "I have a dried flower,
> I have a dried flower,
> I have a dried flower,
> the flower of spirit.
> I have no father or mother
> nor little brother to cry for me,
> and on one side a cold sepulcre . . .
> Spirit, they call me . . . "
>
> And about daybreak, when in the large window of the sky appear the first rays of dawn, this sad lament is heard:
>
> "Day is coming, little one,[33] day is coming;
> day is coming; little one, day is coming;
> and day comes
> for all Christians."
>
> And with this lament the people began to depart from the house.[34]

For the author, this hour of the child's departure from the house to the cemetery represents an optimistic note in the story, for this day of the dead's burial grants freedom from all kinds of miseries:

> . . . The day of death comes to all, to the rich and to the poor, to the ignorant and educated, such is the fate of man; at times it is consolation for those who have endured the dark night of misery.[35]

For the Afro-Puerto Ricans and for all the Afro-Spanish Americans who practice it,[36] the baquiné, or child's wake, is a means of

expression for some of the remaining African elements which are still essential to their life and culture.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Monserrate Deliz, "El Florón," Renadío del Cantar Folklórico de Puerto Rico (Madrid, 1951), pp. 60-63. Typical mourning songs of the florón, or white children's wake, are:

El florón pasó por aquí,
you no lo vi, yo no lo vi.
El florón pasó por aquí,
yo no lo vi, yo no lo vi.
Que pase, que pase,
que pase el florón;
que pase, que pase,
que pase el florón.

El florón está en la mano,
en la mano está el florón;
que pase, que pase,
que pase el florón.

[2]Edwin Figueroa, "Aguinaldo Negro," Sobre Este Suelo (Puerto Rico, 1973), pp. 23-24. The writer of contemporary Puerto Rican short stories, Edwin Figueroa, in his "Aguinaldo Negro" reveals some aspects of the typical baquiné ceremony.

[3]María Cadilla de Martínez, La Poesía Popular en Puerto Rico (San Juan, 1933), p. 335.

[4]Manuel Álvarez Nazario, El Elemento Afronegroide en el Español de Puerto Rico (San Juan, 1961), p. 277.

[5]Luis M. Díaz Soler, La Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico, 1974), pp. 88-89.

En enero de 1768 la compañía Aguirre-Arístegui estableció el depósito . . . y comenzaron a despachar negros en Habana, Cartagena, Panamá y otros mercados principales. . . . La compañía introdujo 9450 negros de Guinea en cinco años. . . . La compañía alegó pérdidas en el negocio, y su majestad, por real cédula de 1 de mayo de 1773, abrogó todas las obligaciones de la compañía, dando paso a un nuevo contrato con la sociedad Aguirre-Arístegui, en la cual se fijó en 245 pesos el precio de los esclavos destinados a Puerto Rico. Quedó relevada la compañía del pago de derecho de marca establecido en la contrata anterior. La isla de Puerto Rico fue substituida por Jamaica como centro de distribución de los negros llevados a América.

[6]Álvarez Nazario, El Elemento Afronegroide, pp. 278-79.

Otras palabras mantenidas en los léxicos rituales de los afroamericanos, que semajan guardar alguna relación fonética y semántica con dichos vocablos yorubas, son: en Haití, baka "espíritu maléfico que se envía en contra de alguien," de enlace arrente con la voz yoruba (también conservada en Cuba) "abikú'niño que muere antes de los doce años de edad por influjo de un espíritu maléfico de igual denominación"; en Surinam, en la lengua criolla "taki-taki," baka-futu-banya es "baile en honor de los antepasados"; en Recife, Brasil, se canta en supuesta lengua nagó o yoruba una oración ritual de sacrificio en la que figura el término bokuno, de sentido no divulgado, cercano en sus sonidos al bokomo de uso en el habla fon de Dahomey para nombrar al "sacerdote o adivino que entiende en la interpretación del destino."

[7]Díaz Soler, Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico, p. 172.

El Bando de Policía y Buen Gobierno de 1862, en su artículo 113, estipulaba que "no se permitirán bailes en los altares de Cruz, ni

velorio de párvulos; trasladar cadáveres de gente de color de una casa a otra para llorarlos ni cantarles a estilo de la nación a que perteneczcan; ni se podrá hacer tampoco en casa del difunto."
[Footnote 19: Bando de Policía de 1862.]

[8]Cadilla de Martínez, Poesía Popular, p. 335.
Esa costumbre de creer ángeles a los niños no es exclusiva de Puerto Rico; Rodríguez Marín en sus Cantos Populares Españoles comprueba que existe en España y en Italia.

[9]Alvarez Nazario, El Elemento Afronegroide, p. 277.
Según testimonio recogido por el folklorista Garrido, en Carolina, zona de población eminentemente negroide, "visten al angelito de blanco, le ponen un clavel en la boca en señal de inocencia y lo adornan con profusión de flores. Alrededor del niño juegan y cantan; nay, además, bebidas y comida. Esta ceremonia dura toda la noche, y por la mañana lo entierran."

[10]Francisco López Cruz, La Música Folklórica de Puerto Rico (Sharon, Connecticut, 1967), p. 164. The cuatro is one of the typical instruments of the Puerto Rican peasants' musical groups, and is used to accompany the improvised décimas (or composition of ten eight-syllable verses), coplas (or couplets), aguinaldos (or kind of villancico--Christmas carol improvised and sung by the peasants at Christmas time).

[11]George List, A Comprehensive Study of the World's Music with Documentation and Explanatory Notes (New York, 1973), p. 70.
To keep awake the participants play games, tell stories, and eat and drink. There is often considerable horseplay.

[12]López Cruz, Música Folklórica, pp. 166-72. Examples of other

baquiné mourning songs are:

"Adiós angelito, adiós":

(Chorus):

Adiós, angelito, adiós,

adiós, para no volver; . . .

(Soloist):

Su madre le daba un té de curía

a ver si su hijo no se le moría. [Etc.]

"Fin, por fin":

¡Fin, por fin, caballero,

Fin, por fin!

Vengo a saludarte,

bello serafín. [Etc.]

[13]Federico de Onís, "El Velorio que oyó Palés de Niño en Guayama," Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Octubre-Diciembre, 1959, No. 5), p. 15.

Lo único que nota Palés respecto de la música es que "son canciones con aire y cadencia de villancicos navideños." Esto quiere decir muy acertadamente que la melodía de este velorio es española antigua, y sería fácil encontrar su procedencia en las canciones y bailes binarios que conservan en el folklore de Castilla y León, de donde pasaron a Andalucía y a América en el siglo XVI. Esta música arcaica, desconocida y casi incomprensible para las personas cultas de España, tenía mucha riqueza rítmica, y los negros, al aprenderla en América, como la lengua y la religión, y adaptarla a sus ritmos ancestrales, simplificaron el ritmo español más complicado y le prestaron su acento.

[14]Ibid., p. 16.

[15]Luis Palés Matos, "Ñam-Ñam," Poesía, 1915-1956 (San Juan, 1968), p. 218. Second stanza, lines 7-8:

Quien llegó hasta Tembandumba
la gran matriarca . . .

[16]William Seabrook, The Magic Island (New York, 1929), p. 93.

The zombie, they say, is a soulless human corpse, still dead, but taken from the grave and endowed by sorcery with a mechanical semblance of life--it is a dead body which is made to walk and act and move as if it were alive. People who have the power to do this go to a fresh grave, dig up the body before it has had time to rot, galvanize it into movement, and make of it a servant or slave, occasionally for the commission of some crime, more often simply as a drudge around the habitation of the farm, setting it dull heavy tasks and beating it like a dumb beast if it slackens.

[17]Lucy Torres, "The Black Poetry of Luis Palés Matos and Its Sources" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1970), p. 112. "In the Haitian cult of voodoo, Papá Ogún (an African deity), represents the great god of the warriors. One of this god's symbols is that of the sabre and the spurs." Commenting about this deity, L. Torres explains in Chapter IX, in regard to his role in the poem "Falsa canción de baquiné": "Still later in the poem the terrible god Ogún becomes, eight times, Papá Ogún."

[18]Luis Palés Matos, "Falsa canción de baquiné," Poesía, 1915-1956 pp. 224-226.

¡Ohé, nené!
¡Ohé, nené!
Adombe gangá mondé,

adombe.
Candombe del baquiné,
candombe.
Vedlo aquí dormido,
ju-jú.
Todo está dormido,
ju-jú.
¿Quién lo habrá dormido?
Ju-jú.
Babilongo ha sido,
ju-jú.
Ya no tiene oído,
ju-jú.
Ya no tiene oído . . . .
Pero que ahora verá la playa.
Pero que ahora verá el palmar.
Pero que ahora ante el fuego grande
con Tembandumba podrá bailar.
Y a la Guinea su zombí vuelva . . .
--Coquí, cocó, cucú, cacá--
Bombo el gran mongo bajo la selva
su tierno paso conducirá.
Ni sombra blanca sobre la yerba
ni brujo negro lo estorbará.
Bombo el gran mongo bajo la selva
su tierno paso conducirá.
Contra el hechizo de mala hembra

cocomacaco duro tendrá.
Bombo el gran mongo bajo la selva
su tierno paso conducirá.
--Coquí, cocó, cucú, cacá--

Para librarle de asechanza
colgadle un rabo de alacrán.
Será invencible en guerra y danza
si bebe orines de caimán.

En la manteca de serpiente
magia hallará su corazón.
Conseguirá mujer ardiente
con cagarruta de cabrón.

A papá Ogún va nuestra ofrenda,
para que su arrojo le dé
al son del gongo en la calenda
con que cerramos el baquiné.

Papá Ogún, dios de la guerra,
que tiene botas con betún
y cuando anda tiembla la tierra . . .
Papá Ogún ¡ay! papá Ogún.

Papá Ogún, mongo implacable,
que resplandece en el vodú
con sus espuelas y su sable . . .
Papá Ogún ¡ay! papá Ogún.

Papá Ogún, quiere mi niño
ser un guerrero como tú;
dale gracia, dale cariño . . .

Papá Ogún ¡ay! papá Ogún.

Ahora comamos carne blanca
con la licencia de su mercé.
Ahora comamos carne blanca . . .

¡Ohé, nené!
¡Ohé, nené!
Adombe gangá mondé,
adombe.
Candombe del baquiné,
¡Candombe!

[19]Peter and Linda Murray, A Dictionary of Art and Artists (Harmondsworth, England, 1972), p. 103.

> Courbet, (1819-77), . . . After he went to Paris in 1840 he taught himself partly. . . . He evolved a vigorous naturalism, . . . which he used in things of everyday life, . . . and his scenes from daily life extend from the depiction of abject poverty in the Stonebreakers . . . to the representation of a peasant funeral in the burial at Ornans. . . . . . proclaimed that only realism was truly democratic, and the noblest subject for the artist was the worker and the peasant.

Courbet's influence on the Puerto Rican painter, Francisco Oller, was quite evident in the paintings "Un Boca Abajo en una Hacienda de Puerto Rico" and in "El Velorio" or "El Baquiné."

[20]Osiris Delgado Mercado, "Oller, Cézanne y Pissarro," Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Abril-Junio, 1960, No. 7), p. 10. The author of this article comments, in regard to Oller's last trip to París:

> En efecto, Oller ha regresado a París con un acendrado "courbetismo"

grandemente propiciado por los afanes sociológicos a que le impulsa el ambiente puertorriqueño.

[21]Ibid., p. 10. Oller returns to Paris in 1895, bringing with him his favorite painting, for the author of the article, "Oller, Cézanne y Pissarro," comments:

Esta vez traerá consigo lo que considera su obra maestra, El Velorio, del que ha enviado anticipadamente una fotografía a Pissarro, y con el que espera conquistar a la crítica de París.

[22]Abelardo Díaz Alfaro, "El Baquiné" (from the English translation by L. Torres), Terrazo (San Juan, 1947).

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid. Abelardo Díaz Alfaro refers to death or the "Grim Reaper" as the "Mala Pelona," the typical folkloric characterization of death by the Puerto Rican people.

[25]Ibid.

[26]José I. Otero, Catálogo de Nombres Vulgares y Científicos de Algunas Plantas Puertorriqueñas (San Juan, 1945), p. 261: "Monkey's hand--baquiña (pothomorphe peltata (L.) Miq.)." To this "baquiña leaf," or monkey's hand leaf, the author of "El Baquiné" refers as the leaf " . . . which heals the illness of flesh and spirit. It is the leaf of hope to protect those whom fortune has disinherited."

[27]The hurricane of Saint Philip occurred on September 13, 1928, and devastated the island.

[28]Díaz Alfaro, "El Baquiné," Terrazo.

[29]Ibid. Díaz Alfaro refers to the "welfare" as the "shameful mantengo" which consisted at that time of only $7.50, an amount below the level of subsistence.

[30]Writers like the novelists: Manuel Zeno Gandía in his work, La Charca (1894), which depicts the life of the peasants--poor workers of the coffee-plantations during the end of the nineteenth century; and Enrique A. Laguerre in his work, La Llamarada (1935), which depicts the life of the workers of the sugar cane plantations during the first decades of the present century.

[31]Díaz Alfara, "El Baquiné," Terrazo.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid. The author of "El Baquiné" refers to the little dead child as "pavito," which is a common term for "little one," a friendly term to call an innocent child.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Álvarez Nazario, El Elemento Afronegroide, p. 280.

Entre los negros de otros países de América, aparte de Jamaica, se dan también ceremonias mortuorias que guardan relación con el baquiné puertorriqueño, aún cuando no se repite en ninguno de ellos dicha denominación. Por ejemplo, en Colombia, cuando muere un niño, se entonan versos al son de la marimba y se desea un buen viaje al "ángel" que "se embarca." Los negros de la provincia de Esmeraldas, en Ecuador, llaman chigualo a un ritual fúnebre que se hace a los niños muertos, en la ocasión del velorio, cuando se efectúan ciertos juegos en los que se mueven en ruedos los participantes y cantan a coro.